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COLONEL FANE'S SECRET.

BY SYDNEY HODGES.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT SEAGROVE HALL.

VERA strove hard to conceal the dismay she felt at this intelligence. It seemed that she could not escape her fate. She had thought at least that in this retired spot she would be away from all association with the painful experiences of the last few weeks; and now, by one of those entirely unexpected freaks of fate which so constantly dog our footsteps, she was brought into immediate connection with the very family she wished to avoid.

Bates saw the change in her face when he repeated the name, and was at a loss to understand it.

"Do you know anything of them?" he asked.

Vera was compelled to equivocate, though it was against her nature.

"No," she answered. "But I did not care for that Mr. Colborne."

"That's base ingratitude, Miss Fane. He thought very highly of you."

"I do not feel very much flattered," answered Vera, still wishing to avoid the subject. "He seemed to me very worldly-minded and artificial."

"I believe he was rather a thorn in the side of Lord Seagrove," said Bates.

"Very much so, I should say," observed Mrs. Meredith. "Much to the annoyance of the family, he has now taken up theatricals professionally. 'I believe his father is desperately angry with him.'"

"Rather rough on the son," said Bates. "The old man has enough to do to keep up his position, and if the younger son can turn an honest penny, so much the better. I think it much to his credit."

"Yes, but it was the sons' extravagance which half ruined the

father. I don't mean the younger one entirely, but the elder one was very wild."

"Six of one and half-a-dozen of the other," said Bates, as he buttered his toast. "Do you mean to accept, Mary?"

"I think so. I am a great deal better, and I like Lady Seagrove so very much."

"Yes, she's charming. You'll like her immensely, Miss Fane. The old man is not bad either, when you get to know him."

"Oh, but I think—if you don't mind—I would rather not go."

Both the brother and sister thought she was dwelling on her recent loss, and both thought it was better not to let her indulge too much in her grief.

"But I don't like to leave you alone," said Mrs. Meredith. "It will be a very quiet affair. We see so much of them that you must make their acquaintance sooner or later. I do hope you will go."

Vera had no valid excuse for further remonstrance. She feared it might excite suspicion.

"If you really wish it. But you quite spoil me with kindness."

"Well, there is not too much of it in this world," said Bates. "Let us help each other when we can."

Vera got away to her room as soon as possible to think over this new complication. Was she never to leave her trouble behind? In her wildest imaginings she never dreamed of being brought into direct connection with these unknown relatives against whom her father had warned her; and yet it seemed her fate to be constantly associated with them. One thought was especially prominent in her mind. Was this house to which they wished her to go the very house from which her mother had been taken on that eventful night described in her father's papers? It seemed more than chance which had brought her to this neighbourhood. Was it not the direct finger of Providence working to some end she could not foresee?

The days glided by very quietly at Halton. The fine weather continued. Frank generally stipulated for his morning run on the beach, and Vera, who had conquered her first feeling of sadness at the sight of the sea—who that has suffered does not know it?—was glad to accompany him. The bright boy was a relief to her sorrow. He was undoubtedly troublesome to his mother, but he was quick at his lessons and very amenable to reason at all times. Bates usually forsook his studies for an hour or two after lunch and devoted himself to the ladies. Vera quickly grew to be an expert rider, and soon became well acquainted with the lovely country.

The eventful Thursday evening arrived. With a throbbing heart Vera took her place in the carriage. The drive to Seagrove Hall was not a long one, but it was a *mauvais quart d'heure* to Vera. Before long, however, she found herself in the vast drawing-room of the old mansion and shaking hands with the hostess, a delicate-looking woman of sixty, who gave her a very friendly welcome. At the same

moment Lord Seagrove, who had been greeting Mrs. Meredith, advanced towards her. The moment his eyes fell on her, however, he stopped abruptly. An almost audible exclamation broke from his lips. Recovering himself in a moment, he held out his hand, but still keeping his eyes fixed intently on her face with quite a startled expression. He seemed so bewildered, in fact, that Bates fancied he was confused as to Vera's identity, and repeated her name as he had done on their first introduction.

"Miss Fane. Ah, yes! Very pleased indeed to see you," he said, in a spasmodic kind of way. "Good heavens! how like," he muttered under his breath. "What does it mean? It is her very image."

"Do you know this neighbourhood, Miss Fane?" asked Lady Seagrove.

"No, it is quite new to me; but Mr. Bates has been so very kind that I have seen a good deal already."

"You must come and see us by daylight. There are some peeps about the park which you will enjoy, though it does not show to advantage at this time of year."

There was a plaintive sweetness in Lady Seagrove's voice, which attracted Vera at once. She looked like one who had known great trouble. Trouble either hardens or makes us sympathetic. It had had the latter effect on Lady Seagrove.

Lord Seagrove was not much over sixty, but his perfectly white hair and somewhat furrowed face made him look older. He was very tall, and, as Mrs. Browning expresses it:—

"Very finely courteous, far too proud to doubt his domination
Of the common people;"

but through his courtesy there was a cold reserve which prevented people ever becoming too intimate with him. The bond of union between him and Bates arose from the fact that both were deeply interested in science, and this had been the means of establishing an intimacy such as Lord Seagrove rarely indulged in.

The party was a small one, consisting only of Lord Seagrove and his wife, Bates and his sister, Vera, and the colonel of the regiment which was quartered at the neighbouring town. Lord Seagrove monopolized Bates to get from him the latest facts concerning his favourite pursuit. Vera found the colonel very bright and amusing, and Lady Seagrove had plenty to say to Mrs. Meredith. Lord Seagrove and Bates retired to a corner as soon as they reached the drawing-room, for the purpose of discussing several knotty points in connection with the sun's corona. Lord Seagrove, who was usually a close reasoner, seemed to-night, to Bates's surprise, somewhat abstracted. He had the arguments all his own way. "Age is beginning to tell on him," thought Bates, little knowing that the other's thoughts were full of a different matter to the one they were discussing. At length Lord Seagrove changed the subject abruptly.

"That Miss Fane—a very pretty girl, by the way—where do you say she comes from?"

"I first met her in Jersey. Her father was a Colonel Fane, who was living in the island."

Lord Seagrove looked still more perplexed.

"It is very strange," he said. "You will be surprised when I tell you that she is so like a sister of mine who died, that I could have sworn it was she who entered the room to-night. What makes it still more strange is, that there was a man in the army named Fane, who was in love with my sister, and, as a matter of fact, she with him; but it was not a desirable alliance, and we all set our faces against it. I don't know but that she might have married him in spite of us, had she lived."

"It is very odd," Bates answered; "but this is the age of coincidences. I suppose it is the enormous population. You can't go anywhere now-a-days without stumbling on somebody you know, or who is like somebody you know."

"Yes, yes; but this is something different, something quite phenomenal. It is no passing resemblance. Her voice, her face, her whole looks, are identical. I declare to heaven it is like one come back from the dead."

The old man seemed more moved than Bates had ever seen him. "Well, well," he said, "I can't account for it. But it is getting late and we have a drive before us."

As they were saying good-night, Lord Seagrove came to Vera.

"You must come and see us often, Miss Fane. You are so like a sister who was very dear to me many years ago, that you have awakened very tender recollections. I am sure Lady Seagrove will be delighted to have you at any time."

Vera started, but managed to control her emotion until they had left the house. It was not possible Lord Seagrove could suspect, she thought, so she soon grew calm again. On the way home Bates said:

"I never saw the old man so cordial to anyone before. It is odd about the likeness. He was quite pathetic about it, poor old fellow."

It was a painful position for Vera. This likeness, of which she had been unconscious, for she only remembered her mother in middle age, was a new complication. She felt that she was in possession of a secret which she ought not to reveal, except under very extreme circumstances, but it would be difficult to act a part. However, there was no necessity for her to go often to Seagrove Hall. She still felt that Lord Seagrove and his father had almost driven her mother to her death, and was in no mood, therefore, to soften her feelings towards them at present.

CHAPTER XX.

BATES IN DANGER.

IT never seemed to occur either to Bates or his sister that there was anything peculiar in his constant excursions with Vera alone. Mrs. Meredith looked upon her brother as such a confirmed old bachelor, and so many years older than Vera, that the idea of any danger in their intercourse never crossed her mind. Girls of Vera's age look upon men of forty and upwards as absolute patriarchs, and she had quite a filial affection for Bates.

Bates, however, was by no means a patriarch at heart. He had been all his life so close a student, that there had been no room in his mind for any tender influences with the fair sex. The present intercourse had been in a manner thrust upon him through his own kind-heartedness ; but it was beginning to awaken feelings in him to which he had hitherto been a stranger. This feeling came home to him more strongly during a brief visit to town. The loneliness of the house in Regent's Park came upon him in a way it had never done when his sister had been absent on former occasions ; and he found himself longing for a return to Halton with an intensity which caused him to question himself closely.

Hitherto his pursuits had occupied and satisfied his mind completely, but now there was ever present to him a vague want which he could not understand, and which troubled him exceedingly.

"It is not possible," he said to himself, "that at my time of life I can be such a fool as to be falling in love ; and that too with a girl who might be my daughter, as far as age goes. And yet her face haunts me wherever I go, and her voice is always in my ears. It is too utterly absurd. The hopelessness of it should be enough to deter me. I am certain, too, that there was something between her and that handsome young Hugh Chetwode, though as she seems to wish to cut herself off from all her friends, whatever there was it has evidently come to an end. At any rate, even if I were fool enough to desire it, there would be no chance whatever for me. No, Mr. Francis Bates, you must stick to your former pursuits and to your widowed sister, and not encourage romantic dreams. It might perhaps be as well, though, not to indulge in quite so many rides and rambles with her alone, though it is certainly a pleasure to have some one who enters into one's pursuits as she does. My sister, like most of her sex, seems to care so little about them."

Bates went back to Halton full of virtuous resolves, but the first fine afternoon scattered them to the winds. He could not resist the temptation of a ride in the brisk frosty air and of watching Vera's cheek glowing with health while her sunny hair rippled in the passing

breeze, and she was herself so absolutely unconscious of any feeling beyond friendship in the breast of her companion.

Of course her position was unusual. She was more like a trusted friend or relation than a paid dependant. As an intimate friend of the Bates's friends, the Lindsays, she had of course come to them on an entirely different footing from that which a stranger would have occupied; and the largeness of heart and breadth of views of both Bates and his sister made them receive her quite as one of themselves. How many a lot might be lightened, without any loss of dignity, if the feeling entertained by these two were more general.

One morning at breakfast, after reading a letter, Bates turned to his sister.

"My dear, I have a surprise for you. An artist friend of mine is coming down to-morrow to paint Frank. I know you would like to have a portrait of him, and I mean to make you a present of it on your birthday."

"Oh, how very good of you!" responded Mrs. Meredith. "It is the thing of all others that I have wanted to have done for a long time."

"Then why on earth didn't you say so?"

"Oh, I don't know. I have put it off from week to week. I meant to ask you about it some time or other."

"Well, it is all settled now, at any rate. Kean is a most amusing fellow, a thorough genius, paints splendidly, and has a strong smattering of science. In fact, it is this that has thrown us together."

"A universal genius," said Mrs. Meredith.

"On the top of all this," continued Bates, "he is a first-rate musician, and plays the piano splendidly, though he rather bangs it about. Composes also."

"He must be a very wonderful man!" said Vera.

"Well, he is unique; but anyway he can paint, and that is our immediate object. There is one thing, however, that you must be careful about."

"What is that?"

"Why, as soon as he has done Frank to your satisfaction, you must manage by hook or by crook to get the picture away from him, or he will probably paint it out."

"Paint it out! What for?"

"Oh, he gets some fad into his head that it is all wrong, and then, in spite of what you may say, he dabs it all over with white and begins again."

"But what a waste of time!" said Vera.

"Exactly, but time is no object with him, as long as he gets the effect that suits his views at the moment. I was once admiring a lovely sketch of some beech trees which he had just done, and he said, 'That—oh, that's all wrong! I'm going to paint it out to-morrow!' 'Are you?' I said. 'You will do nothing of the kind, for I shall walk

off with it !' And so I did. It's one of the best things I've got. You remember it, Mary ? It hangs behind the door in my room."

"Oh yes, a lovely little bit."

"However, he's a very clever fellow, and has made his mark. He'll be making a victim of you, Miss Fane."

"In what way ?"

"Why by getting you to sit for some subject or other."

"I don't think I should care for that."

"Oh, but you won't be able to resist him. He'll bother you till you do."

"I am afraid he will find Frank rather troublesome," said Mrs. Meredith. "He is so restless."

"Oh, there are ways of keeping him quiet. Bribe him with sweets, or get Miss Fane to read stories to him. That will quiet him."

"I shall be very glad, if it will have the desired effect."

"An idea has just struck me," said Mrs. Meredith. "I have been wanting to ask Lily Heath down—such a charming singer, Vera ! She is coming out as a professional. It would be a capital idea to have her down while Mr. Kean is here ; we should be quite a merry party !"

"A happy thought," said Bates. "I should write at once, and try and fix it."

He was thinking that the arrangement might divert Vera's mind. They had been leading a very quiet life so far, for neither he nor his sister cared for gaiety, which indeed interfered with his pursuits ; but he was willing to sacrifice himself for the good of others.

Kean and his paraphernalia arrived the next day. The artist was a good-looking man of thirty or thereabouts, with a penetrating black eye and a close-cut beard. He arrived just in time to dress for dinner, so he did not see the ladies until they met in the drawing-room. The introductions over, he bent an admiring gaze on Vera, and Bates felt that his prediction would be verified.

"Have you had a pleasant journey down, Mr. Kean ?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"Oh, yes, thanks ! The country seems very pretty about here."

"Lovely ! We can take you for some very nice drives, though it is not the best time of the year."

"One gets some fine effects in winter though. By the way," he added, turning to Bates, "have you heard of this new theory about the Glacial Periods ?"

"I was certain you would bring some new and startling theory with you," said Bates, laughing. "What is it ?"

"Why, this theory about the sun. They say the planets were thrown off by the sun, at long intervals, when it was in a state of vapour, and that each planet condensed and formed itself into a world."

"That theory is as old as the hills," said Bates.

"Yes, but they now apply it to the Glacial Periods. It seems that elephants and other tropical animals are found embedded in ice; therefore the ice must have come on them suddenly."

"It doesn't follow; but go on."

"Well, they attribute the sudden formation of ice to the fact that the sun had thrown off another planet, and thereby lost some of its attractive power at the same time."

"Well?"

"Well, the consequence of course would be, that the attraction being lessened the planets already formed flew off further into space, and consequently we had a sudden Glacial Period. Very ingenious, isn't it?"

"Very; but do they explain how our planet got warm again?"

"Well, no, I don't think they do."

"That's a pity. There's the gong. So, to fortify ourselves against a sudden Glacial Period, suppose we go in to dinner. Will you take my sister?"

They took their places: Kean opposite Vera, on whom he fixed his intensest gaze. Bates was just in the humour for banter.

"I suppose you were bursting with your new theory all the way down?" he said. "Fancy your firing it off before you had even had your soup! What an impulsive fellow you are!"

"I believe in impulse," said Kean. "I'm of such a sluggish nature that, if I didn't act on impulse, I should never act at all. I should have acted on another impulse now, if you had not attacked me."

"What impulse?"

"I should frighten Miss Fane out of her life if I told you so suddenly."

"I am not easily frightened," said Vera.

"Well, then, I'll make the venture. Yours is just the sort of face I've been looking for for the last three months. I want it for a subject I am painting."

Bates burst out laughing again.

"I knew he wouldn't be in the house an hour without wanting to paint you, Miss Fane."

"I feel very much flattered," said Vera, with a slight blush.

"Well, will you let me make a study of you? It will be a tremendous help to me if you will."

"If you put it in that way, I don't see how I can refuse."

"That's awfully good of you!"

"We have another young lady coming to-morrow," said Bates. "You had better tackle her, too."

"Who may that be?" asked Kean.

"Miss Lily Heath," said Mrs. Meredith.

"What!" almost shouted Kean. "Lily Heath! Why, we're tremendous chums! She never lets me have any peace—nor I her, for the matter of that."

"What, you know her? So much the better. We wired to her to-day to know if she would come, and she says 'Yes.'"

"She's an awfully good singer. Splendid contralto voice; but such a little thing that you are quite astonished to hear such a volume of melody coming from so small a figure. I play her accompaniments."

"You'll have to get up some duets with her, Vera," said Mrs. Meredith. "Your soprano will go well with her voice."

"I am afraid I don't know enough about singing to venture on anything with a professional," answered Vera.

"Oh, it is the amateurs who are going ahead nowadays!" said Kean. "Amateur singers, amateur artists, amateur actors! We are getting swamped with them!"

"I can answer for Miss Fane's capabilities in the last respect," said Bates, unconscious of the delicate ground upon which he was treading. "She electrified us with her acting at Brighton."

"Oh, pray don't say anything about it!" exclaimed Vera, with a feeling of deadly faintness at her heart at this unfortunate turn in the conversation. "I wish I had never taken the part!"

Bates looked up in surprise. He saw her agitation and was silent, although he could not imagine what had so moved her. Kean, however, went on.

"It is very odd! I seem to associate you with acting somewhere. Your face struck me when I first saw you. You must be like some one I saw in the provinces; I forget where."

Kean was intent upon the leg of a pheasant, and did not look up; but the ever-watchful Bates saw the deepening confusion in the girl's face and her evident distress. He changed the subject.

"When do you mean to begin upon your young sitter, Kean?" he asked.

"As soon as you like. I must interview the young gentleman in the morning, and get into his good graces. That's half the battle with children."

"I can't imagine how you keep them still enough," said Mrs. Meredith.

"It is rather a job sometimes; but I have a variety of entertainments for them. I imitate an entire farmyard for their delectation, and promise them any animal they like if they keep still for so many minutes. To imitate a clock striking twelve is another performance of absorbing interest to the infant mind, especially if you tell them that the moment they move the clock stops."

Presently the ladies made a move to the drawing-room, and when the gentlemen joined them shortly after, they found Mrs. Meredith with a pile of favourite pieces, which she begged Kean to play. The latter went to work in his usual impulsive way, dashing at the forte passages with a vigour which made the piano rock.

Vera was at the other end of the room absently turning over the

pages of an illustrated paper. Bates took a seat by her side. She turned to him at once, and said in a low tone:

"Mr. Bates, I want to ask you to do me a very great favour."

"Certainly, if I can. What is it?"

"I hardly know how to begin. You will think it so very strange."

"Don't be afraid to tell me. You know I have a very sincere friendship for you, and feel the deepest sympathy in your trials."

"I am sure of that. You have been too kind to me. I don't know what I should have done without you. Well, then, I must say first that I went through some very, very painful experiences just before I saw you; I mean apart from my sad loss."

"I had suspected this."

"But I cannot even now tell you what they were. Perhaps one day I may be able to."

"I will not try to penetrate your secret if you don't wish me to know; but, if you were to tell me, might I not be able to help you?"

"You are more than kind, but I don't think you could. Only in this way. We have been leading a very quiet life here, seeing but few people—this was what I wanted. Now there seems a prospect of our life being broken in upon to some extent, and by people who move about a good deal."

"Yes."

"Well—I am afraid you will think it strange—but I wish the fact of my being here to be kept as much a secret as possible—even from intimate friends—even from the Lindsays."

"But they will be sure to hear of it sooner or later. Will they not think it strange?"

"Perhaps later on it may not so much matter. For the present, at any rate, there is no necessity to say anything."

"No necessity certainly. I am sorry now that we have invited Kean and Miss Heath. I thought it would make a pleasant change for you."

"Oh, no, no! I could not expect you to forego anything of that sort. It would be too unreasonable."

"Nevertheless, if I had known you disliked it, I would not have done so."

There was a tone in his voice—almost a tremulousness—which caused Vera to look up. He was usually so unemotional and matter-of-fact. Not for one moment, however, did she divine what was passing in his mind—that it was pain to him to have caused her a moment's uneasiness.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EVENING WITH THE TELESCOPE.

THE music came to an end, and Kean went over to where Bates was sitting with Vera.

"You promised me a look at Mars, you know. It will be about in the right position now. I am most anxious to see your telescope."

"Well, there is no reason why we should not have a look. Perhaps you would like to come too, Miss Fane?"

"I should very much. I have not seen Mars."

"I think I will say good-night then," said Mrs. Meredith. "You will be star-gazing into the small hours, I expect."

"No, there is not much to be seen except Mars at present," said Bates.

"But the god of war is a host in himself, anyway," said Kean.

"I am in a fever of anxiety to see what it is like in a big glass."

They were soon in the observatory, and the telescope was brought to bear on the red planet, which was shining in an unclouded sky.

"I should explain for Miss Fane's benefit that the planet is now what is called in opposition: that is, it is opposite the sun. We are in fact between it and the sun."

"And consequently it is nearer to us than at any other time. Within the trifling distance of thirty-five million miles, in fact," said Kean.

"Thirty-five millions!" echoed Vera.

"You must not be astonished at that," said Bates. "It is a mere step in comparison with the distances of other planets. When you looked at Saturn the other night, you were looking through something like eight hundred million miles of space."

"It is impossible to grasp it," said Vera.

"Quite so, but we must accept the fact nevertheless. Now, will you take the first peep?"

Vera put her eye to the glass.

"How wonderful!" she exclaimed; "why, there are little markings. It is like a small earth, and what is that white spot at the top?"

"That is supposed to be the snow in the polar regions—most probably is. But here is Mr. Kean dancing with impatience. I am afraid he will do you some bodily injury if you don't let him look, Miss Fane."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Vera, coming down from the platform. "A telescope certainly makes one feel dreadfully selfish."

Kean soon had his eye glued to the eye-piece.

"By Jove! or rather by Mars! that's rather fine," he said. "But I don't see any of the markings which they call canals."

"You must have a more powerful glass than mine to make them out. I believe they are to a great extent imaginary. If they exist at all, they must be the work of giants; they are at least two hundred miles in width."

"I don't see why there should not be giants there. We had them here in the days of Jack the giant-killer."

"Don't be irreverent, or I shall forbid your looking."

"I am not irreverent. I don't see why we should judge everything by our own world. There is no reason why men should not exist in other planets forty feet high. That snow at the pole is wonderful. I could just make out a small patch with my little glass."

"How big is that?" asked Vera.

"Only a six-inch reflector—a mere pigmy."

"But he made it himself, Miss Fane," said Bates. "Got a friend to lend him the speculum, and a carpenter to make him a wooden tube, then he fitted a mirror and bought some eye-pieces, and set it up. Oh, he's a wonderful man, I assure you. But now," Bates went on, "I am going to tell you something about Mars that will astonish you. It has two satellites, and one of them actually revolves round the planet in a little over seven hours."

"Seven hours!" exclaimed Vera.

"Yes. Fancy our moon running round us three times in the course of the day. It seems an impossibility, but then the Martian satellite is much closer to the planet than our moon to us, and is very very small."

"How small?" asked Vera.

"Well, not so big as the Isle of Wight, for example."

"How wonderful! But how can they ever see it?"

"Well, they do with the most powerful telescopes, but then only when the planet is in the most favourable position for observation. Professor Asaph Hall, of Washington, has the credit of the discovery. He found them in 1877, and telegraphed to the British Association, which was then sitting. But there is another fact connected with them which will interest you. Dean Swift actually foretold the discovery of two satellites in his 'Gulliver's Travels,' and not only that, but he actually makes his imaginary astronomers—the astronomers of the Island of Laputa—state that the revolution of one of the satellites took place in ten hours. Considering that the satellites were not discovered until a century and a half later, this was a guess at the truth which seems absolutely miraculous; especially as the revolution of a moon round a planet three times in a day—that is faster than the planet itself revolves—is a fact without parallel in the known universe."

"Another proof that truth is stranger than fiction," said Kean. "Of course the astronomers of Swift's time treated the statement as a joke, as doubtless Swift himself did; but it was a very marvellous shot."

"Well, it is all very wonderful," said Vera. "I wish they would give us a little insight into all these wonders at school. You have opened a new realm to me."

The next morning Kean made a beginning by sketching in Frank with his hand on Nep's collar—the dog being nearly as tall as the boy. It was a trial for Master Frank to keep still; but Kean and Vera between them managed to amuse him throughout the trying ordeal.

In the evening Miss Heath arrived by the same train which had brought Kean the day before, so the first sight Vera had of her was in the drawing-room before dinner. She was a bright-looking little creature with black eyes and a pretty smile. She and Kean seemed to plume themselves for the fray at once. He advanced towards her, and said with mock formality:

"How do you do, Miss Heath? How is your sister and your brother?"

"Quite well, thank you," came the quick reply; "but I think, under the circumstances, Mr. Kean, 'how are' would be more correct."

"Thank you," said Kean quietly. "I am grateful for the correction; but the fact is, I was looking at you so attentively that I thought them *singular* as well."

The singer gave a quick little gasp.

"I'll be revenged on you for that," she said, with a malicious sparkle in her eye.

"I shall live in hourly dread," said Kean; "but we mustn't quarrel before dinner—it will take away our appetites."

"And here's dinner announced," said Bates as the butler entered the room. "Kean, will you take my sister? I suppose a man of forty is equal to two young ladies of twenty, isn't he? So, come along, both of you."

"And how did Franky behave to-day, Mr. Kean? I hope you got a good sitting," said Mrs. Meredith as soon as they were seated at table.

"Oh, capitally!" answered Kean. "Miss Fane seems to have quite a soothing influence on him. By the way, when may I sketch you, Miss Fane?"

"Do you really want me to sit?"

"Yes, really. I want it for a picture I am painting. 'The Gardener's Daughter'—from Tennyson, you know.

'One arm aloft,
Gowned in pure white that fitted to the shape,
Holding the bush to fix it back, she stood.'

You know the passage?"

"Yes; it is a favourite poem of mine. I'll sit when you like."

"I pity you," said Miss Heath quietly.

"Why?" said Vera.

"Because I know him of old. He'll make you stand three hours a day for three weeks, and then paint it all over white and want you to begin again."

"Do you plead guilty, Kean?" said Bates.

"No, it's the libel of a malicious friend."

"Hadn't you better leave out the 'r,' Mr. Kean?"

"Perhaps it would be nearer the truth, Miss Heath; but I would not have ventured if you had not suggested it."

"Oh, you are nothing if not original!"

"Or 'singular,' perhaps?"

Miss Heath winced.

"I am treasuring it all up," she said.

"I wonder you let such a pugnacious man play your accompaniments," Bates said.

"Oh, it's the only thing that civilises him! 'Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,' you know."

"Hadn't you better leave out the 'r,' Miss Heath?" said Kean.

"Perhaps it would be nearer the truth, Mr. Kean; but I would not have ventured if you had not suggested it."

"You scored then, Miss Heath," said Bates; "but I suggest a truce until we have heard what you can do together."

The music later on was certainly delightful. Kean moderated his energy when accompanying, and Miss Heath's voice in Lassen's lovely 'All Souls Day,' and in the favourite old ballad 'On the Banks of Allan Water,' enchanted all the party. Vera was carried quite out of herself, and spent the most enjoyable evening she had known for a long time. Both Bates and his sister marked her enjoyment, and felt that they had done a wise thing in inviting their talented guests.

Vera was made a victim the next day. She gave a sitting for the sketch, but Kean, who was full of amusing anecdotes, chatted away on all sorts of subjects, and the time did not hang heavily.

"What a man Bates is!" he said. "What a range of subjects his mind embraces, and how modest he is about it! Nothing pedantic either. Any other man with his knowledge would be on a pedestal which you could not approach, but he is as simple as a child. I believe he could buy up half the peerage, and yet how quietly they live."

"Is he so very rich, then?" asked Vera.

"Enormously, I believe. I don't think he knows himself what he is worth, and yet you see they are as unostentatious as possible. I believe he gives away quite a large fortune in charities."

"He has been very kind to me," said Vera.

"So he is to every one with whom he is brought into contact. He's an awfully good fellow, there's no doubt about it. The head a little more that way—thanks, that's just right. I can't tell you what a

help this will be to me. It's so awfully difficult to find just the faces you want for so many different pictures."

A week glided by, and both pictures progressed rapidly. For a wonder Kean was himself satisfied, and expressed no wish to paint either of them out and begin again. The days passed pleasantly, and the evenings, diversified with music, chat, and astronomy, were never dull. The pleasant companionship and the tranquil life insensibly led Vera's thoughts more and more away from the painful past, and she regained a tranquillity and even a contentment of mind to which she had long been a stranger. She could not but feel deeply thankful that she had found such a haven of rest after the brief but stormy period she had passed through since those golden days of autumn, when her future had seemed so fair, and her past had been so comparatively unclouded.

CHAPTER XXII.

A CATASTROPHE.

"ARE any of you of a sufficiently sportive turn to wish to see the meet of the hounds to-day? They meet at Seagrove Hall at eleven, and if any one would like to go I shall be happy to escort him or her and give him or her a mount."

This was Bates's announcement at breakfast about a week after Kean's arrival. Kean looked up in surprise.

"You don't mean to say you hunt?" he asked.

"No, I don't, but I was guilty of it in my younger days. I am afraid now that I consider it too utterly trivial."

"Trivial! I thought it was considered a very manly sport."

"As far as the bold riding goes, I suppose it is; but it always strikes me as something highly ludicrous that two or three score of men got up to the nines in spotless boots and equally spotless breeches should go tearing over the country at the heels of five-and-twenty couple or so of hounds, for the sake of running into a wretched little animal that they have probably bred for the purpose, or at least helped to breed, and that couldn't harm them in the least if it tried its level best."

"But they say it is for the sport, and to keep up the breed of horses."

"Well, I don't say I object to it if they like it, but the whole thing strikes me always as so comical. Why not have their ride across country without the fox?"

"It's the nature of man to kill."

"It was once, no doubt, for the sake of getting his food, but I don't think fox-flesh would be agreeable. However, regarded from a picturesque point of view, a meet is interesting. The fine breedy

horses, the red coats, the pretty women, the dappled darlings, the smart carriages, possibly with a background of fine open country: all this is a sight not to be despised. Have you ever seen a meet, Miss Fane?"

"Never."

"Then let me advise you to go. It is a thing to be seen for once in a way. What do you say, Kean?"

"Riding is not one of my accomplishments. As soon as I was up one side I should probably be down the other."

"Well, we won't tempt you to your destruction. What do you say, Miss Heath?"

"Thanks. I decline for the same reason as Mr. Kean. It's a comfort to agree with him for once."

"I feel half inclined to go after that," said Kean.

"Well, as the morning is fine, I will drive you over if you like," said Mrs. Meredith.

"That would be delightful!" said Miss Heath.

"Will you come with us, Mr. Kean?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"No, thank you; I shall stay and paint. I want to take advantage of the bright morning."

"I only go on one condition," said Bates; "that is, with the strict understanding that you don't take a mean advantage of my absence to paint out."

"Oh, I promise! I am too well satisfied at present. The catastrophe may come later."

"But, seriously, Kean, you won't be up to any tricks of that kind? Both Franky and Miss Fane are as like as possible. You won't go and alter them?"

"No, I think you may trust me this time."

"Well, then, that being settled, we had better be preparing; we shall be none too early."

An hour later Bates and Vera rode into the drive at Seagrove Hall, while Mrs. Meredith and her friend came close behind them in the pony-carriage.

It was an enlivening scene. The approaches to the drive and the park beyond were thronged with carriages filled with gaily-dressed occupants. Nearer the house the horsemen were assembled, most of them in irreproachable pink, and mounted for the most part on hunters of such breed and bone that they could hardly be matched in any other part of the habitable globe. Some few on foot were passing in and out of the great entrance-hall, while others were indulging in the good things spread for their delectation in the big dining-room.

The whips were among the hounds just below the "ha-ha," where the pack were evidently undergoing inspection, lying down on the grass or trotting about in anticipation of the coming run.

Lord Seagrove, the former master, had ceased to ride himself; but

the present master, a wealthy squire of the neighbourhood, was making his way towards the pack preparatory to a start.

"They are going to draw Basset Copse," said Bates to his sister. "We shall ride home that way. If you go with us, we may see something of them."

"I am going round by the river to call on Mrs. Grey," answered Mrs. Meredith. "You had better take Miss Fane the other way, as she may like to get a peep at the hounds."

By this time the master and the pack had left the park followed by the hunt. Bates and his companion went along a lane which ran almost parallel to the course the hounds had taken, but on the other side of a ridge. They had gone about a mile when Bates suddenly pulled up.

"Listen!" he said. "I thought I heard the hounds on the other side of the hill."

"I hear them most distinctly," said Vera.

The sound came to them at intervals; a sudden burst, then silence, then another outburst.

"They have found already," said Bates. "They are chopping about in cover. When the fox breaks he will probably go away down the valley with this wind. We should see them from the top of the ridge. Are you game for this fence?"

The lane was bordered by a low rail and a shallow turf ditch. Vera hesitated. She was hardly up to cross-country work yet.

"Oh, I think not!" she said. "But I can wait here till you ride up to the ridge, or I could find my way home alone."

"No, indeed you will not! Just go on quietly to the top of the hill yonder. I will keep along the ridge and join you there. Then I can tell you what they are about."

He put the grey at the fence, which was easily cleared, and then rode on up the slope to a tract of common land beyond. When he reached the top he pulled up for a minute or two, and then, waving his hand to Vera to go on, pursued his own way along the ridge at a walk, and appeared intently watching the valley below from which the music of the hounds still came intermittently.

Vera went slowly on. As she advanced, the hazel bushes grew up more thickly on each side of the lane, and Bates was screened from view. At this moment she became conscious of the sound of a horse coming at a quick pace along the lane behind her, and, turning to look back, she saw a horseman in pink rapidly approaching.

She was somewhat disconcerted. She was under the impression that all the field had gone on, and moreover she thought it would appear strange for her to be seen riding alone. She drew quietly into the side of the lane to allow the rider to pass.

To her surprise the horseman reined up when close beside her, and on raising her eyes she saw to her astonishment that it was Mr. Colborne.

It was the very last thing she could have desired. All the misery of that dreadful night came back to her with a rush. In spite of Colborne's pertinacity on that most trying occasion, she knew that she had acted precipitately and that she must have placed him in a great difficulty. In her calmer moments she could hardly blame him for his expressions of love although they were so ill-timed. Would he make her pay the penalty of her desertion?

Colborne raised his hunting cap.

"I have startled you, Miss Fane," he said. "Forgive me. I could not pass without speaking to you. In fact, I may as well confess that I have been watching for this opportunity. I saw you at the Hall, but I wished particularly to see you alone, as I have something to say."

Vera had somewhat recovered herself by this time, and fears of a recurrence of his persistency of that night arose in her breast. She answered coldly:

"Mr. Colborne, I think we had better not recur to the past. I fear I did wrong in leaving you so suddenly. If I placed you in a difficulty, I am sorry for it, and ask you to forgive me, but I felt it impossible to remain after what had passed."

"I cannot think that was your only motive," said Colborne, with a covert glance at her. "However, we need not say any more on that point. What I wished to see you about is this. I find you are living at Halton. We are bound to meet, and I thought it better to arrange with you that there should be no reference to the past, but that we should meet merely as acquaintances. I could no longer withstand my father's opposition. I have had to give up my company."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. My brother, Lord Burnham, is seriously ill, and has been sent to the south of France. I shall have to remain here some time looking after my father. As far as I see there is no need to let them know that we have ever met before."

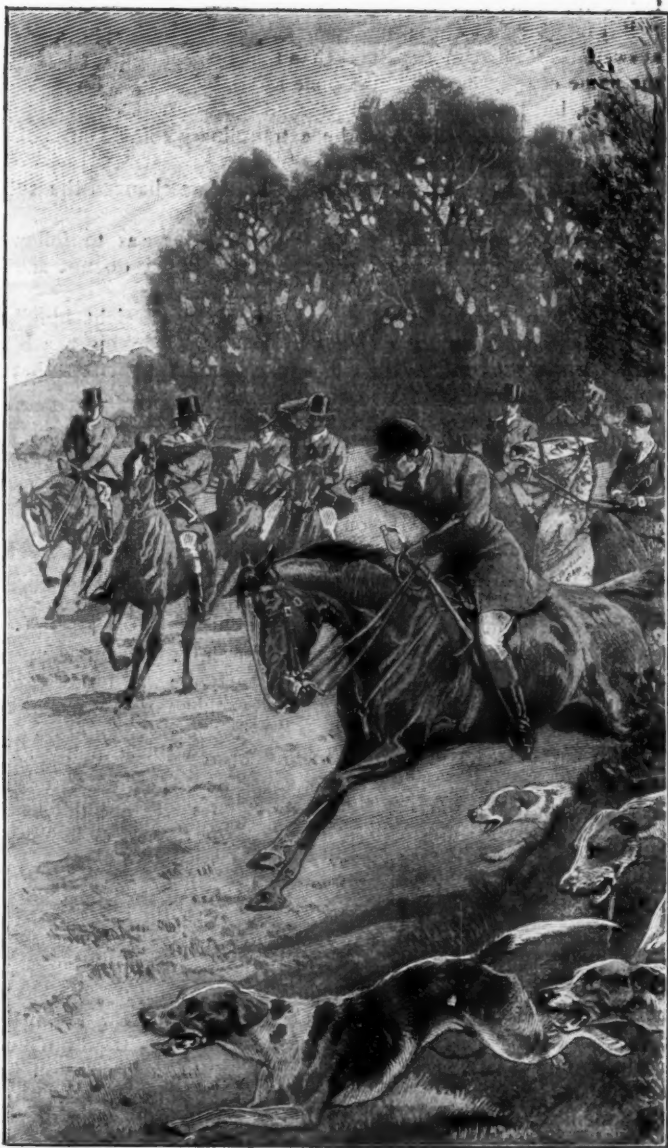
Vera saw the force of the argument, though she objected to the deceit it involved. She wished, however, to bury the past utterly, and bowed her head in consent. Colborne went on.

"I know I treated you unfairly that night by pressing my suit at a most unfortunate time. You need not fear that I shall offend again. You will not object to our meeting as friends?"

"No, certainly not."

"My father has been telling me of this wonderful likeness to his sister. When he learnt your Christian name he was still more astonished. It is a thing I cannot fathom myself. It seems inexplicable. Can you offer any solution of the mystery?"

Vera felt her heart sink as she heard these words. Had Colborne been looking at her he must have seen the change in her face, but his attention was diverted by the sudden swerving of his horse. She



"ACROSS THE COMMON, STILL FURTHER AWAY, SHE SAW THE HOUNDS GOING
AT TOP SPEED . . ."

was forced to speak, but she was more than ever disinclined to reveal the secret of her mother's resuscitation.

"It appears that my father was very fond of your aunt," she answered. "What more natural than that he should give his daughter the name of the woman he had once loved."

"Yes, but the likeness?"

"Oh, that must be one of the extraordinary coincidences of life! Life is full of them."

Colborne looked far from satisfied, but Vera changed the subject abruptly.

"I cannot imagine where Mr. Bates is; he was to follow the ridge until we met at the top of the hill, but I do not see him anywhere."

"I will ride up the slope, and see if I can sight him," said Colborne, feeling only too glad that he had made his peace with Vera; while she on her part was congratulating herself that the dangerous subject was averted.

"I shall be much obliged if you will," said Vera.

"It is hardly likely that he has gone on with the hounds, and left you here alone," said Colborne. "They have broken cover and the fox must have gone away down the valley with a pretty hot scent judging by the music. If you will ride on to the top of the hill, I will see if I can find Bates. I hardly know how to thank you for meeting me in this way. It has taken a load off my mind."

He was over the fence and going up the slope before she could reply, even if she had wished to do so. She pursued her way with conflicting feelings in her breast. The past—that troubled past—had all been re-opened, and at a time when she was just beginning to know peace. Well, at any rate, she thought no great harm could come of this encounter after all. Colborne had evidently no desire to refer to their former relations, and no hint of them need ever come from her.

She reached the top of the hill, but Bates was not there. She checked her horse and stood gazing along the ridge. Colborne had now disappeared and she could not understand it. She looked down upon a wide and fertile valley, with a wood at the bottom, and, emerging from it, a stream, which, glittering in the sunlight, wound away to the lower meads across which, more than a mile away, she could just discern some specks of scarlet half hidden by intervening trees and hedges. Across a common still further away, she saw the hounds going at top speed, and she could just hear the mellow music of their voices borne on the morning air. It was a lovely scene, and in spite of her recent perturbation of spirit, Vera could not help pausing in admiration to gaze over the sunlit landscape.

Suddenly, to her intense surprise, she saw the grey horse Bates had been riding going at full speed across a field at some distance below her. Where was the rider? Was it possible that he had

dismounted, and that the horse had broken away? She knew Bates was a good and careful horseman, and she could not understand it. A sudden chill struck her heart. Was it possible that he had been thrown?

It was all open common around her now, for she had come to the end of the fence. As quick as thought she turned her mare towards the top of the ridge and put her at her best pace. Just over the summit was a wall of loose stones running parallel with the ridge and turning at a right angle down towards the wood, enclosing a partly-cultivated field. As she reached the angle of the wall she saw Mr. Colborne galloping towards her on the other side. In a moment he pulled up abreast of her with quite a scared look in his face.

"For heaven's sake, Miss Fane, ride away for some help. Bates has had a bad spill. He is lying insensible over there. His horse must have come a cropper at the wall. Get any one you can—get a vehicle of some sort. I will look after him till you come."

Vera felt her heart stop, but she was not one to be daunted in emergencies. She made up her mind at once. It was only a mile to Halton. She could cover the distance in a few minutes. The mare was put upon its mettle, and the next moment she was flying along the road as fast as breed and bone could carry her.

In five or six minutes she was in the stable-yard and had made known the facts to the old coachman. Dreading the effects of the intelligence on Mrs. Meredith, she rode to the house, but found the widow had not returned. She sought the old housekeeper, and, telling her what had occurred, begged her to break the news gently to her mistress. Then, armed with a flask of brandy, she was back in the lane within five minutes, and was flying along towards the scene of the accident at the same headlong speed.

Meanwhile the coachman had put a horse in the brougham, and had started towards the spot Vera had named only a few minutes after her. As Vera neared the common, she saw Colborne with two men carrying Bates towards the road on a hurdle. The men had been working in a distant field, and had been attracted by Colborne's shouts.

Bates was still unconscious, but, of course, it was impossible to tell what injuries he had sustained. They got him into the brougham which had now come up. Colborne tried pouring a little brandy between his lips, but it had no effect. He supported him in his arms, while Vera rubbed his hands, which were deadly white, and from time to time touched his lips with the contents of the flask.

"How terrible it is!" she said. "How could it have happened?"

"Either the old horse bolted when the hounds broke cover, or Bates, for some reason or other, rode at the wall. The horse must have caught the top of the wall with his forefeet, for there are marks of his coming down heavily, and there are some scattered stones. I

fear Bates must have pitched on his head. "It is a mercy his neck was not broken."

"Oh, do you think it will be fatal?" she asked, with a great sinking of the heart.

"I don't think so. I don't fancy there are any bones broken, and his heart is beating freely. I ascertained that. I fancy it is concussion of the brain. It may not be serious."

"Pray God it is not! Oh, he has been so good to me! And his poor sister! What a shock it will be to her!"

When they reached the house they found that Mrs. Meredith had returned and was waiting for them in the porch. Like many delicate women, she was good in emergencies, and rose to the occasion; but, nevertheless, the anxiety in her face was intense. A groom had been despatched for a doctor, and Kean and Miss Heath were also ready to lend a hand.

They got Bates into the dining-room, and placed him on a large couch.

"I would not attempt to undress him at present," Colborne said; "I have had similar cases to deal with. Let him lie as quietly as possible. Put a hot bottle to his feet, and rub his hands and forehead with eau-de-Cologne. I think you had better all leave the room except Mrs. Meredith and Miss Fane; you can do no good. I will go and hurry up the doctor."

For more than an hour the two sat and watched, but there was no sign of returning consciousness in spite of the restoratives.

"What can the doctor be about?" said Mrs. Meredith. "This tension is terrible. Even if the first was out, surely Mr. Colborne would have found another."

"It is impossible to say. I am sure they would lose no time; but it is dreadful to think we can do nothing."

"I *must* do something!" Mrs. Meredith exclaimed. "This delay is maddening! Will you bathe his forehead while I go and see what they are about?"

Vera took the eau-de-Cologne and gently moistened the sufferer's forehead with it. Her own heart was strangely stirred. He had been so good a friend—so good and kind to everyone.

"Oh, if the injury should be fatal!" she thought.

The sunlight was coming into the room through a chink in the lowered blind. It fell upon Vera's golden hair as she bent over the sufferer, with her hand gently chafing his forehead.

Suddenly, without any warning, Bates opened his eyes. He fixed them on Vera. For a moment he seemed dazed and bewildered; then a look of happy recognition came into them.

"Vera," he said, putting his hand on hers, "what is it? What has happened? How sweet to think you are watching over me!"

(To be continued.)

JUNE ROSES.

(See Frontispiece.)

JUNE roses bloom around them. On her face
Responsive roses glow.

(June roses wither: What shall live to cheer
In days of gloom and snow?)

Her lover tells her of the castle halls
Where she will rule with him:
He shadows forth their happy wanderings
In woodlands vast and dim.

He tells her of the gifted, good and great,
Who will salute his bride:
And whispers softly of his mother's love
Which will smile satisfied!

She gazes, spell-bound, on his eager face,
And yields her to his kiss:
Yet have her eyes a look as if they seek
For something that they miss:

E'en while he tells his dreams of climbing high
On pinnacles of State:
Of her name, written on historic page,
Dove, with an eagle mate!

And then his voice takes on a deeper note:
And tells her how he knew
That rank and power and genius, priceless gifts,
The dower of the few,

Are theirs, in trust for service of the rest,
Poor folk who toil and spin:
Since joy must open gates, as Heaven does,
That all may enter in!

"And now," says he, "by your sweet love I'm bound
To higher service still:
God's guerdoned knight henceforth must wage His war
Against all wrong and ill."

Then her sweet eyes their searching shadow lose;
She flutters to his breast,
For in the love that sees beyond herself
A woman's heart can rest.

ISABELLA FYVIE MAYO.

THE MARQUIS OF WORCESTER AND HIS "CENTURY OF INVENTIONS."

BY E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR, M.A., F.R. Hist. Soc.

THE reign of Charles II. was essentially a reign of surprises. It was on the whole a peaceable but hardly a prosperous one. Coming between the turbulent times of Charles I. and the Civil Wars, and the no less disturbed years which marked the administrative incompetency of James II., it has taken unto itself a reputation for pleasure and *insouciance* which, if we refer to the pages of Pepys, and above all of Evelyn, we shall hardly find justified. The so-called "Merry Monarch" was little more than a king on sufferance, and a student of his times will feel inclined to believe that nothing saved his again becoming a traveller but his easy-going nonchalance. Not that Charles was in some ways a bad kind of sovereign. He would have been a better monarch had he had more capable ministers.

The reign of Charles II. fell on bad times. It was not an age of painters like his father's, which the rows of painted puppets at Hampton Court and elsewhere will witness. It was not an age of pedantry like that of his grandfather, or of heroism like that of Elizabeth. The king himself was a nice amateur kind of monarch, just the sort of ruler to be adored by an unthinking generation coming after one that had given itself too much to thought. He was brave (in a pleasant unaggressive sort of way), incontestably witty, good-humoured, and amenable, especially to women and bad advisers; he had quite a wonderful knack of liking uninteresting persons and being interested in unlikable ones. Indolent by nature he could at times be extremely active; but when the phase was passed, he became still more indolent than before. Had he not been a king, it is probable that no one but a busy man could have done so little.

But in one thing (which brings us to the subject of this paper) Charles was beyond his times. He possessed an essentially scientific nature, and spent hours in his laboratory when minutes in his council chamber would have bored him to death; and though we hear of his snoring in church and nodding at a Privy Council, no curious inquirer has yet unearthed the fact that he ever fell asleep over an experiment or yawned at the sight of a receiver.

A superficial glance through Pepys would lead one to believe that scientific thought at this time had as much favour among the subjects as with the monarch. Indeed, by some startling references in the diarist's pages, we might suppose that few things were left un-

The Marquis of Worcester and his "Century of Inventions." 665

experimented with under the merry monarch; but when we have said that the Royal Society came into existence and formed the nucleus of that marvellous progress in scientific experiment, which is day by day taxing the energy of its votaries, we have really said all we can for the experimental ardour of the latter part of the seventeenth century.

Our business here, however, is with one who in the daring nature of his projections anticipated by nearly two centuries some of those benefits which mankind to-day could hardly imagine itself without, and who stands almost alone in the ardour with which he threw himself into experiments of every kind.

The Marquis of Worcester was a very remarkable man. True the little work which he published in 1655 is not of great moment as a literary document, giving as it does simply a summary of what his active brain comprehended; but the bare outline of such conceptions proves that he had thought deeply on most scientific matters, if immaturely and even childishly on a few. What scientific training he received, or from whom he inherited this bent of mind is not very apparent from his personal history.

Born in 1601, he was educated privately and abroad, and so far from giving himself up exclusively to the study of mechanics, we find him by successive military stages reaching the exalted position of generalissimo of three armies, and (a connection that seems strange to us nowadays) becoming Admiral of the Fleet in 1644. It is to be noted, however, that his military experience strongly biassed the nature of his genius, as a reference to his brochure on the inventions he claims to have perfected will prove.

To the historian he is best known under his earlier title of Earl of Glamorgan, when in 1645-6 he brought over a body of Irish soldiers to assist Charles I. in his struggle with Parliament.

The incident, as is well known, has given rise to much controversy, particularly on the part of Carte, who had use of the MS. *Memoirs of the Rinnocini*, the Pope's Nuncio, and subsequently of the author of 'The Inquiry into Lord Glamorgan's share' in the transaction. We are not concerned here on this point, however, and pass on to his rise in civil and military command, notably that he became Master of the Mint in 1644, and two years later General of Munster, in which position the powers with which Charles I. invested him were so great that many of the Royalists themselves were struck with astonishment, and, we may reasonably presume, envy.

In December of the same year he succeeded his father as second Marquis of Worcester. Lord Clarendon speaks of him as "of a fair and gentle carriage towards all men, as in truth he was of a civil and obliging nature." * The fall of the sovereignty brought with it the inevitable result of his arduous exertions for the king, and from

* 'History of Rebellion,' vol. iii. p. 440.

July 28th, 1652, to October 1654, he was kept a close prisoner in the Tower.

It was during this confinement that the Marquis gave himself up to an uninterrupted contemplation of the many inventions evolved by his fertile brain. But for such studies he had a better opportunity still during his residence in France, where he remained until the Restoration. Three years later appeared the little work on which his reputation as a mechanic and experimental philosopher rests; its well-known title runs thus:—

"A century of the names and scantlings * of such inventions as at present I can call to mind to have tried and perfected (which my former notes being lost) I have, at the instance of a powerful Friend, endeavoured now in the year 1655 to set these down in such a way as may sufficiently instruct me to put any of them in practise."

Horace Walpole slightly notes that the book is "but a table of contents," and writing so late as 1758 adds, "no wonder he (Lord Worcester) believed in transubstantiation, when he believed that he himself could work impossibilities."

We can hardly, therefore, be surprised, in view of such a judgment a hundred years after the publication of this work, that at the time of its appearance its author was by many held to be little better than a madman, and by a more tolerant portion of his contemporaries as at least an amiable monomaniac. The fate of those who are beyond their fellow-men in foresight can unhappily be hardly otherwise, and of such can well be applied the fine remark of Coleridge with regard to Milton, that he lived "among men before whom he strode so far as to dwarf himself by the distance."†

Lord Worcester's little work is dedicated to Charles II., and contains, as well, some works to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal; and, considering that he was here addressing a body of men who were hardly further in advance in such matters than the mass of the people, the author's remark, that "it is jointly your parts to digest to the king's hand these ensuing particulars, fitting them to his palate, and ordering how to reduce them into practice," which seems to be either a good natured attempt to suppose their brains on a level with his own, or an amiable quiz at the leaders of the nation.

In this address, the author mentions one Caspar Kaltoff as being competent to undertake the practical exposition of the inventions hinted at, and one whom he calls an unparalleled workman both for trust and skill, "who hath been these five-and-thirty years as in a school under me employed." The name of this faithful companion and servant deserves to be perpetuated.

As its title denotes, the work comprises one hundred headings of

* Scantling—the French *Echantillon*: a specimen or pattern—*e.g.*, a small quantity. Dryden uses the word: "a scantling of wit."

† 'Biographia Literaria,' Chapter II,

inventions, and although among them there are many which may seem even now impossibilities, yet scattered among the "Century" are the embryos of some of the great inventions of the age. We find the telephone and the torpedo, the infernal machine and the electric launch, air-tight compartments for ships and locks for rivers, pontoon bridges and clay pigeons, revolvers and gatling guns, secret padlocks, flying machines; nay, Volapuk (which some ingenious modern has applied as a universal language), at least hinted at and in some cases more than hinted at; and the stopping a vehicle by instantly letting free the horses, is distinctly aimed at in the nineteenth Scantling.

But it is on Scantling No. 68 that we are chiefly able to base Lord Worcester's claim as the forerunner of one of the most valuable of all inventions. "He had," says Macaulay, "recently observed the expansive power of moisture rarefied by heat. After many experiments he had succeeded in constructing a rude steam engine, which he called a fire water-work, and which he pronounced to be an admirable and most forcible instrument of propulsion. But the Marquis was suspected to be a madman, and known to be a Papist. His inventions, therefore, found no favourable reception. His fire water-work might perhaps furnish matter for conversation at a meeting of the Royal Society, but was not applied to any practical purpose."

Two hundred years have brought us safely through this "cimberian darkness" of incredulity into something beyond the dawn of belief in the seemingly impossible. Taking into consideration the strides that science has made on all sides during this comparatively short period, we can hardly wonder that the man who was anticipating a couple of centuries should have been considered a harmless fanatic incapable of anticipating anything.

There is every reason to believe that Savery took from our inventor the hint of his steam-engine for raising water with a power made by fire. An invention which, as Granger says, would alone entitle the author to immortality.*

Inventors are seldom allowed the credit of the offspring of their reflective minds, and we are not surprised when we find Lord Worcester's claim disputed or his merits depreciated.

One of the most curious of these attempts to lessen his renown comes from France, and appears to involve so curious a piece of secret history that we make no apology for noticing it at some length.

It was, in fact, asserted that Lord Worcester took his idea from Saloman de Caus, whose name will be familiar to students of James I.'s reign as having come to England whilst in the service of the Elector Palatine, the son-in-law of James, and as having been employed by the Prince of Wales in work for the gardens of

* See the account of it in Dr. Desagulier's works.

Richmond Palace, his name being mentioned in connection with the incidental expenses in the *Archæologia*.* De Caus's claim was upheld by Arago, who based his opinion on a work published in Frankfort in 1615 by De Caus, and which would thus have anticipated, if substantiated, Lord Worcester's claim by about forty years.

Six years after M. Arago's claims, and purporting to confirm his assertion, there appeared a letter supposed to have been written on February 3rd, 1641, by Marion Delorme to Cinq Mars, and this is, as far as it affects our present topic, what the document contained:—

"Pursuant to the wishes you have expressed, I am doing the honours to your English lord, the Marquis of Worcester, and I am taking him, or rather, he is taking me, from sight to sight. For example, we paid a visit to Bicêtre, where he thinks he has discovered in a maniac a man of genius As we were crossing the court-yard of the asylum, I more dead than alive from fright, a hideous face appeared behind the large grating and began to cry out in a crazy voice, 'I am not mad, I have made a great discovery that will enrich any country that will carry it out.' 'What is this discovery?' said I to the person who was showing us over the asylum. 'Ah!' said he, shrugging his shoulders, 'it is something very simple, but you would never guess it. It is the employment of the steam of boiling water.' At this I burst out laughing. 'This man,' resumed the warder, 'is called Saloman de Caus. He came from Normandy four years ago to present a memoir to the king upon the marvellous effects that might be produced from this invention. To listen to him you might make use of steam to move a theatre, to propel carriages, and in fact to perform endless miracles. The Cardinal dismissed this fool without giving him a hearing. Saloman de Caus, not at all discouraged, took upon himself to follow my lord Cardinal everywhere, who, tired of finding him incessantly at his heels, and importuned by his follies, ordered him to Bicêtre, where he has been confined three years and a half, and where, as you have just heard, he cries out to every visitor that he is not mad, and that he has made a wonderful discovery. He has even written a book on the subject, which is in my possession.'

"My Lord Worcester, who all this time appeared to be in deep thought, asked to see the book, and after having read a few pages, said: 'This man is not mad, and in my country, instead of being shut up in a lunatic asylum, he would be laden with wealth. Take me to him, I wish to question him.' He was conducted to his cell, but came back looking grave and sad. 'Now he is quite mad,' said he; 'it is you who have made him so. Misfortune and confinement have completely destroyed his reason, but when you put him into that cell, you enclosed in it the greatest genius of your epoch.' Thereupon we took our leave, and since then he speaks of no one but Saloman de Caus."

* He wrote a work entitled '*Perspective ou Raison des Miroirs*,' which he dedicated to Prince Henry.

The letter was received by the writers of standard works as authentic. But the document was not only proved by M. Figuiet to be a forgery, and the hoax traced by Dr. Delepierre to one Berthoud, who had invented it to suit an engraving by Gavarni produced in the publication in which the letter was introduced, but De Caus never was confined in a lunatic asylum at all, and, so far from being repulsed by the French Court, he held the office of engineer and architect to Louis XIII. until his death in 1630; an event which occurred just eleven years before the interview, thus circumstantially narrated, is supposed to have taken place.

Besides all this, Dr. Lardner pointed out that even had De Caus known of such a method, it was Lord Worcester alone who applied the agency of steam in the manner in use in the present day.*

Such was the fate of a clumsy attempt to destroy the priority of Lord Worcester's most important contribution to scientific inventions.

The hint that really gave the investigator the idea for his 68th Scantling was the following. It is said that Lord Worcester was preparing some food in his apartment when the cover of the vessel, having been closely fitted, was, by the expansion of the steam, suddenly forced up. The reflective mind of the inventor was aroused by this circumstance, and the train of thought thus engendered passed by successive stages to the comprehension of a machine which he called a "water-commanding engine," producing "an admirable and most forcible way to drive up water by fire, not by drawing or sucking it upwards. But this way hath no bounder, if the vessels be strong enough."

That the "engine" was completed and experimented with, if the results deducible therefrom were not applied, is proved by the fact that it was exhibited at Lambeth before Cosmo de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, when that prince visited England in 1656; the fact being recorded in the Diary, which he, after the fashion, of travelling princes then and now, kept of his wanderings and reflections.

Only four years after the publication of this result of restless activity in the field of experimental philosophy, and after a life spent in the service of two monarchs in civil and military labours, the extraordinary mind of Lord Worcester ceased to reflect, on April 3rd, 1667. Of the two great Diarists of the time, Evelyn, who knew everyone and heard everything, passes over the event in silence; and Pepys, noting other things of importance on April 3rd, 1667, tells us how he "saw Prince Rupert abroad in the Vane-room, pretty well as he used to be, and looks as well, only something appears to be under his periwig on the crown of his head."

* 'The History of Inventions,' 1868.

THE GLOVE.

BY M. A. M. MARKS, AUTHOR OF "MASTERS OF THE WORLD."

HIS SERENE HIGHNESS the Hereditary Grand Duke of Saxe-Altenburg Waldburg could, and frequently did, invite all his subjects to come and take tea in the palace gardens.

He could, from the windows of his palace, look abroad over at least two-thirds of his dominions; and a six-hours' ride in any direction would bring him to his frontier, on the other side of which somewhat arbitrary and even disputed line reigned another Serene Highness, with other laws, other impost duties, and (to the confusion of the British tourist) other coinage. Judged in the eyes of the British tourist, the Hereditary Grand Duke of Saxe-Altenburg Waldburg was but a twopenny-halfpenny potentate. Yet he possessed a palace quite as imposing as an English gentleman's country seat; he had a Prime-minister, a Court Chamberlain, and a score or so of other high-official persons, all of whom wore high-official countenances and had a general air of mystery and reticence very nearly equal to that which so painfully impresses deputations that approach our own Ministers of State.

It is true that his Excellency the First-Minister's portfolio might appear, when compared with that borne by his brother crown-adviser of England as a penny account-book to a merchant prince's ledger, but what of that? Do inches of stature make a man more a man? Is a king less a king because he measures his dominions by roods instead of by leagues? Was there not everything which constitutes a kingdom in Saxe-Altenburg Waldburg? Were there not court intrigues by the dozen, political cabals by two or three, besides the regular opposition? Did not the members of the cabinet cordially hate the First-Minister? And did not the graceless nephew and heir-apparent of his Serene Highness favour the opposition, to the further embroilment of affairs?

Moreover, was not this very First-Minister and crown-adviser at polite loggerheads with the Grand Duke himself, who had fantastic schemes of reform upon which the First-Minister, being a professed liberal, steadfastly frowned?

And should more proof yet be wanting to show that the Grand Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg Waldburg was as much a kingdom as our own favoured land, was not the Grand Duke mightily jealous of his next neighbour, the Electoral Prince of Lichtenstadt, who was more than suspected to be intriguing with the Court of Vienna for the annexation of Saxe-Altenburg Waldburg to his own Electorate?

Yet, for all these undoubted marks of royalty, the Grand Duke of Saxe-Altenburg was a scandalously simple-minded Prince.

Anyone could see him on any summer evening, sitting at a little table in the gardens (where the public were freely admitted, and freely came) smoking, and sipping the Rhine wine, as he chatted with one and another. It not infrequently happened that a Saxe-Altenburger with a grievance would approach, and, removing his hat, pour his woes into the Grand Ducal bosom.

On such occasions the Grand Duke would listen gravely, promise redress, not heeding the frowns of his Prime Minister (who always kept him in view for fear of these accidents), and proceed the next day to administer justice in some hopelessly unofficial and unconstitutional way, whereupon the Prime Minister would resign in respectful indignation, but be finally prevailed upon by his gracious sovereign (who didn't know where to get another minister) to resume office the day after.

As for the natural features of the kingdom, there was the capital, Saxe-Altenburg, a pretty little town, with walls on which the citizens walked with their families of an evening, and a Platz, adorned with the statue of the late Grand Duke.

Then there was a beautiful old-world church, such as we shall never build again, perhaps because even the wonderful carved stone can no longer express man's deepening and widening thoughts of God, perhaps partly for other reasons less satisfactory to human self-complacency. Then there was a theatre, conscientiously patronised by the Grand Duke, and a picture-gallery, small, but enriched with many admirable works collected by the Grand Duke in his early travels, and with the best works of native artists.

A School of Art had been established by a painter of considerable eminence, and the little city was never without several promising young art students, who made copies of the best pictures in the gallery, or sketched in the neighbouring mountains, for from the walls of Saxe-Altenburg you may see the long blue line of the Erz-Gebirge rising slowly from the wooded plain.

Saxe-Altenburg Waldburg possesses many woods, as its name implies, and the best half of a tolerable sized river, on which the town is built. There are a great many comfortable villages on the plain and in the spurs of the Erz-Gebirge, but Saxe-Altenburg is the only town in the little Duchy.

The fame of the excellent picture-gallery attracted me to Saxe-Altenburg.

I was on a walking tour through that part of Germany, no matter how long ago, and was easily induced to go ten miles out of my way, to see a collection of great merit, which most travellers miss, because Saxe-Altenburg lies thus far off the beaten track.

I arrived in the town on a market-day. The peasant women from the country sat under their many-coloured umbrellas, in costumes which charmed me. I was an art student myself, and was still in

that youthful stage of devotion to Art, when the merely picturesque can satisfy, and the sunburnt faces, the odd head-dresses and gay petticoats, the piled-up heaps of fruit and vegetables, the rude country carts drawn up on one side of the Platz, with the donkeys and ponies peacefully regaling themselves, nose in bag, the hum of voices, unmistakably foreign, even heard at a distance, and the foreign appearance of everything made a vivid impression on me.

I had seen many foreign towns already, but their names were familiar, and familiar English faces met me at every turn in their streets. Here for the first time I could please myself with the belief that I might be the only Englishman in the town—perhaps in the Duchy, and the fancy gave a zest to all the strangeness round me, while it awakened a curious pang of home-sickness. For a moment the gay Platz and the busy market vanished, I saw the quiet London street where I was born, and the far-off glimpse of the Hampstead fields.

But the sweet mellow chimes of the church clock recalled me. It is a beautiful church with a tower that rises high above the queer old roofs of the town, and the chimes swung over the Platz through the dazzling blue air of a July day, sending a thrill and quiver all through me.

I refreshed myself at the Goldener Hirsch, and then, as the afternoon was still early, found my way to the picture-gallery.

A pleasant old gentleman bowed to me as I stepped into the first room; he was the only person there at the time, but others came in in the course of the afternoon, and from one of them with whom I entered into conversation, I learned that that was the Grand Duke, with many particulars concerning the Duchy. The same communicative person also gave me the history of one of the pictures—a history sufficiently romantic to bear repeating.

It was wearing late, and I was almost the last left in the rooms, but only a few pictures remained to be seen, and I was anxious to set out early the next morning. Passing over a few small landscapes, I came upon a picture which hung alone, no other picture occupying that side of the small room in which it was.

The subject was Schiller's poem "*Der Handschuh*." The artist had chosen the instant after Kunigunde has dropped her glove. The arena, with the "terrible cats," the lion, the tiger, and the two sleek leopards, was powerfully given, but the touches, though sufficient for the purpose were few, the artist had evidently concentrated his strength on the figures in the balcony—on Kunigunde, with her mocking smile (in which lurked an anxious vanity) as she pointed with slender white hand to the tiny glove close to the crouching lion's paw; and on Delorges, with his flushed face and a dark look in his eyes—a look which seemed as one gazed to darken, love seemed to be dying out of them, and all love's tender fancies; from henceforth Delorges saw Kunigunde as a vain and selfish woman. With that glove she had cast a brave man's heart away.

But she did not know it; her haughty glance took in all the other faces round her, not only Delorges', but he saw her alone for the last time. Hereafter she would be one of the crowd to him—never, never again the one woman in the world.

"The picture pleases you, mein herr, not true?" said a voice close behind me. I turned, and saw a small man with misty blue eyes, and white hair and a gentle, melancholy smile. I had observed him during the afternoon, and had carelessly remarked to myself that he was surely an Idealist—probably an Hegelian.

"The story is admirably told," said I. "How superbly scornful the lady looks, as though she half despised her own power. And yet, I think that haughty smile of hers says, 'It is little enough to pay, sir, for a smile from me, though I do bid you fetch my glove from between the paws of the lion!'"

"Ach! ach! right good, Herr Engländer, mein herr is an Englishman, not true? You have the quick understanding and insight," said the little German, rubbing his hands. "More, it seems to me, than this beautiful, proud lady, or she would see something in her cavalier's eyes to make her not quite so comfortable, eh, mein herr?"

"Truly," I replied, "there is an ugly look in them, as though he scarcely appreciated the honour the fair Kunigunde is doing him. A handsome man, too, and I fancy that little girl thinks so, there, in the corner of the balcony—the one with her hands clasped so tight together, and such a beseeching look on her face, and a very pretty face it is. I almost think I prefer it to the more stately beauty of this stony-hearted dame; *she* would never send her knight into the lion's mouth to gratify her vanity. Who knows but Delorges may some day entreat her to take the love of which he has just seen that Kunigunde is unworthy?"

"Good, good, right good!" said the little German once more. "You read the story of the picture so well, that maybe you would like to hear the story of the fair lady who sat for Kunigunde; it is beginning to be forgotten, but when I was a young man everyone knew it."

We sat down on a bench in front of the picture.

"But the gallery is empty, and the light is going; we shall be shut in," said I. The little German smiled.

"I have the honour to be the custodian of this picture-gallery," he said. "And we are shut in already. It was in making my usual tour of the rooms after the gallery is closed that I found you so lost in contemplation of this picture that you had not heard the gong which announces the hour of closing."

"I am much indebted to your carefulness," said I. "It would be more romantic than agreeable to spend a night here alone, with the moonlight playing—who knows?—what ghostly tricks among the pictures."

"Pardon! Do you say that in jest, or have you heard anything

concerning this gallery, for example?" asked the custos, in a tone suggestive to an imaginative mind of endless ghost-stories.

"Not a word, dear sir, not a word. But even now, when the sun is scarce set, the empty rooms are sufficiently unheimlich. What must they be a little past midnight, with the moon making darkness, and the shapes that haunt the darkness, visible?"

"There is evermore a something *unhomely* about the emptiness of places which we are accustomed to think of as crowded," said the custos, glancing down the vista of empty galleries as he spoke. "To me, these galleries seem more thronged now than in the day-time; for I cannot resist the fancy that all who have ever trodden them in years gone by—our Grand Duke's uncle, the Grand Duke Adalbert, who began to make the collection, and all the scheming courtiers, and dainty ladies, and thriving burgesses—all who ever came here to lounge away the hours—or perhaps," with a sly smile, "to see the pictures. All these, I fancy, come here again by night—all, at least, in whose life-story this gallery has a place, and there are many, many such. Among them all, surely comes she who was the model for Kunigunde yonder. A curious thing once happened to myself, about that picture—but of that no matter."

And then, as we sat in the gathering twilight, with Kunigunde's mocking face gleaming white from the surrounding gloom, the custos told me, somewhat in the following words, how, very early in the century, soon after Duke Adalbert had begun that patronage of art for which he was distinguished among the minor German princes, an artist of great repute opened a school in Saxe-Altenburg. I had noticed and admired several of this artist's works that afternoon, and he was the painter of this picture also, which was considered his masterpiece.

Many pupils soon gathered round him, whose friend, as well as master, he became. He was a man of strong mind, and shrewd observation, who mixed freely in society, and taught his scholars that no artist can afford to live apart from the world he means to paint.

"See all you can, hear all you can, above all, feel all you can," he used to say. "Only be careful always to look for the real things. If society means to you the feasting your eyes on satin petticoats and high-dressed hair and meretricious furniture and the listening to trivialities which have less meaning than the buzzing of flies' wings, you had better keep out of it. But if society means to you men and women, if you can hear their hearts beating all through the chatter and clatter of their lives—if you can, disregarding all external things, perceive the same tragedy, the same comedy going on everywhere, the more you see of it the better.

"If artists look for the picturesque in any one direction only, they are pretty sure to end in painting clothes; look at human nature all round and everywhere if you would paint souls! You will be saved

from losing yourselves in details, till you yourselves have forgotten what was your central idea, if you ever had one. You will become preachers, satirists, poets—not merely painters of pretty pictures. Forget as much as you can whether the woman whose face you are studying is a court-lady or a chamber-maid; ask yourselves rather what emotion, what passion does her face express? You will be richly repaid. Nature will justify you to art, and will tell you how to clothe your soul befittingly. Work from within outwards, and your colour will be truer than if you worked inwards from without."

As may be imagined, Franz Mohr's theories were much opposed by rival masters. He was accused of neglecting the A B C of art, to which he is said to have replied that he who can read and spell may leave the alphabet to take care of itself. "He teaches everything to his pupils, except painting," said another adverse critic to one of Mohr's students. The indignant youth repeated the words to his master, who, however, only smiled and said, "Every man who ever painted truly taught himself. I teach you how to learn; you must do the rest yourselves."

Mohr gave much less instruction in the mechanical part of his art than was usual. He allowed his pupils to see him paint, on condition of perfect silence. "I cannot paint truly," he would say, "if I am painting to illustrate some law of colour or form; my picture would be like a story with a moral—all a lie."

He was ready to answer any questions afterwards, but while at his work he was inexorable.

No doubt this method was admirably adapted to develop real genius; Mohr insisted on his students working as much as possible without assistance; he would give an occasional suggestion, but that was all. Many of his pupils became famous, and were distinguished for their individuality and the absence in their works of any trace of Mohr's own style.

This was Mohr's supreme ambition. To be the founder of a school of painting was abhorrent to him. "Paint out of your own soul," he was always reiterating.

A merely clever copyist, with no original genius, would have made no progress with this eccentric master: indeed Mohr rejected several such pupils in the early part of his career; he absolutely refused to be a "copy-book," as he phrased it. If a pupil had ideas, he would help him to express them; if not, let him seek some other master, though, indeed, any good sign-painter would do!

The force of Mohr's character, and the simplicity and unbending independence of his life compelled the respect of those who feared his outspoken tongue. This outspoken tongue of his even made him a court favourite, the Grand Duke doubtless finding Franz Mohr as grateful, amidst the pervading insipidity of his court, as caper-sauce when applied to boiled mutton. Not that Mohr could often be prevailed upon to visit the palace, but the Duke was allowed to come

to the painter's studio, and there he forgot that he was a duke: a delightful sensation, one would think, to a much-bored potentate.

Just about the time when Franz Mohr was making the first rough sketches for this picture, before which we are sitting, there was among his pupils a certain Count Friedrich von Waffenheim. He was the youngest son of a house rich in quarterings, but poor enough in all other of this world's goods.

"Fritz," as everyone called him, was a young man with a strong bias towards art, and with even some genius; but besides the morally-enfeebling influences of a position in which to gracefully do nothing in particular for a few years, then to marry a well-born heiress, and ever after do nothing at all, would have amply satisfied the demands of society, Fritz had the nobler distraction of impending war.

Austerlitz had just been fought, and the terrible Little Corporal was watched by the eyes of all Germany with as much anxiety and almost as superstitious a fear as ever comet was watched by their awe-stricken ancestors. What he meant, what he would do next, were the questions which men eagerly asked each other, and the answers, however given, always resolved themselves into these two words—*fire* and *sword*.

Fritz held a commission in the little army, which was a contingent to a force made up of many such members—a disjointed army enough, with jealousies as rancorous as though each independent little State had not spoken the same German language and belonged to the same German Fatherland.

And there were rumours of a new war. Prussia was going to revolt (to such a pass had the kingdom of Father Fritz and Fritz the Great been brought), and Saxe-Altenburg and the rest of the confederated duchies would probably join her.

Meanwhile, Fritz von Waffenheim spent half his time in Mohr's studio, gruffly tolerated by the painter, who loved the boy, but who steadily refused to consider him a pupil, or to receive any payment for the little instruction he vouchsafed.

"Thou art playing," he would say—"playing a little earnestly, I admit, but still playing. Thou art but an amateur at the best."

"Dear master," Fritz would plead, "I work as long and as hard as any of your pupils."

"But thou dost not think of art as thy profession—thou hast not risked thine all for art. Seest thou, if any of these others turn out a bad painter—pouf! he must go to the wall, while for thee, a count, a lieutenant of lancers, and what not, it will matter nothing. The ladies will find thy pictures charming without doubt, however bad they may be. 'Tis a pity—thou hast some genius. If thou hadst been compelled to paint for thy living, who knows? That last study of thine had merit. But force—force—thou wantest force. Thou art playing, as I said."

"But, dear master, you cannot mean that painting for daily bread

is a noble motive—a nobler motive than painting for pure love of art?”

“No no, and yes yes!” said Mohr. “The man who paints such and such pictures because they will fetch most money is a mere huckster; *his* pictures will never be immortal, they won’t even live so long as the dinners they bought him! But does not the man who paints for a living, paint for the pure love of art too? He must needs work—good! Why does he choose art? He might be a carpenter, a merchant, a lawyer, a hundred things. He chooses art because he loves her. And he will not serve her the less because he has thrown his whole life at her feet. Ach, there is much talk of pure love of art! The man who chooses art for his profession shows his love for her rather more, I fancy, my Fritzchen, than the man who only gives her a few of his leisure hours. Bah! it is like marriage—a true marriage, I mean. Is it not a greater compliment and tribute to a woman to marry her than to pick up her fan, or to wear a rose she has thrown away at a court ball.”

“Ah, dear master,” said Fritz, flushing all over his fair face like a girl, and then turning very pale, “you are right, a thousand times right! But what if the lady will permit one to pick up her fan and—and—the flowers that are too faded for her to wear, but will not listen to the words one desires to say?”

“Leave her and her flowers for some one who likes faded things. A woman who would put such dishonour on a man should never be worn in my heart, were she fairer than Helen of Troy herself.”

“Ah, you have not seen her,” sighed Fritz. “When you have looked in her eyes, you will understand—and they look so kind, though her words are cruel!”

“My Fritzchen, I love thee well, but thou art a fool,” said the painter, as he drew back to observe the effect of his sketch of Kunigunde.

“Do but see her, dear master—will you not go to the ball to-night? The Duke is grieved that you always refuse. Do but go for an hour, and see a face that Titian would have prayed leave to paint!”

“Thou art a fool, Fritz!” growled Mohr again. “Perhaps I will go for thy sake, and because I am sick of this simpering Kunigunde of mine—little Aeunchen, good little soul, can never give me the look I want; if *she* snubbed a suitor, he would ask her to do it again. Kunigunde—— Bah!”

And Mohr wiped out the whole figure, and turned the sketch to the wall in disgust.

It was the Grand Duke’s fête-day, and there was a ball at the palace. In the gardens tables were spread under the chestnut-trees, and all comers were welcome to drink the Rhine wine and the strong German beer, and otherwise regale themselves at their sovereign’s expense. There was music, too, under the trees, and the dancers who

footed it there were much merrier, and quite as picturesque, if less elegant, than those who trod their statelier measure on the polished oak floor of the ball-room, lighted by flaring bonfires instead of the broad moon, and the little coloured lamps which lent a queer sort of enchantment to the open-air revel.

These others saw themselves reflected in mirrors, whose elaborate frames still showed traces of the gilding daubed upon them in the tinsel-and-spangle days of Louis-le-Grand, and scraped off, as far as could be without injuring the exquisite carving, by the purer taste of the reigning Duke.

The rooms were thronged; besides the usual court circle, everyone in Saxe-Altenburg, and indeed in the Duchy, of the least note, had been invited. Fashion is now almost as fleet of foot as Rumour herself; but then, except in the great capitals, she lagged behind sadly; so these provincial beaux and belles danced their minuettes and quadrilles in the hooped petticoats which in Paris had been superseded by a classical garb whose severe simplicity makes Madame de Pompadour's most outrageous toilette seem positively modest.

The good folks of Saxe-Altenburg would have been sorely scandalised by the costume *à la Diane*, which was just then the rage in Paris—though, indeed, nothing would have induced them to copy a new French fashion, however desirable in itself. The women clave to the hoops and enormous hats, and high-heeled shoes, and square-cut, short-sleeved bodices of Louis XV.; and the men had their waistcoats made with deep pockets, and covered with embroidery and gold lace till they stood out with stiffness, and gave the long-skirted coat itself something of the effect of a petticoat.

When we have thoroughly realised the fact that all which appears *is an effect*, what a deep significance does that realisation give to the conditions which, philosophers tell us, are all we know. Conditions!—call them rather results—fruits of an unseen tree whose roots are as deep as the soul of man. When we look through a book of costumes we see the character of each age stamped on its dress as plainly as each monarch's image on his coins.

It was the State night of the State Ball. Franz Mohr was there, dressed handsomely, to do honour to his friend the Duke, but as soberly as the fashions allow. He stood in one of the deep-recessed windows of the ball-room. Young Von Wffenheim was there too, his eyes roving hungrily among the crowd, till they lighted on a stately lady, taller than most of the women in the room, her head set on her shoulders so gracefully that her haughty carriage might seem, to a lover's partial judgment, only the defensive armour against too bold admirers of her beauty. As she stood, with her back towards the window, and the pearls gleaming in her dark hair, piled high above her head, but unpowdered, even Mohr (who needed not to ask Fritz, all flushed and trembling, who the lady was) exclaimed in sudden admiration, "Der lieber Himmel, she has the figure of an

empress, be her heart what colour it may!" But he did not utter this opinion in Von Waffenheim's ears.

"Look, look, dear master; she has turned her face this way," said Fritz in an eager whisper.

The lady's face matched her figure. The dark hair, combed back, showed a broad, rather square forehead above arched, black brows and an aquiline nose. Her mouth was beautiful, but the lips, though shaped, as lips should be, "like Cupid's bow," were too thin, and had a certain unrelenting look in their calm smile. Her eyes were hazel, perhaps a little too small, but then their lashes swept her cheeks, and her cheeks were rounded in a finely-moulded oval, and were as brilliant and more delicate in tint than any peach that ever ripened on a southern wall. The blue veins on her temples could be distinctly traced under the soft white skin, and her neck and bosom vied with the finest antique models (as might be seen by all who could spare a glance for the statue of Diana on the pedestal close by). Who could stay to coldly criticise and remark that her mouth was a little cruel and her bright eyes a little hard?

"Is she not divine—unapproachable?" says poor Fritz in his master's ear.

"Divine? Ach! Better be human first," growled the painter. "Let her get a heart of flesh into her bosom and a little love and pity into her eyes."

"A very handsome woman, Herr Kunstler, do you not find her?" asked a middle-aged, military-looking man, coming up to the little groups in the window.

"So is the Diana yonder," replied Mohr, "with this advantage, that she will never grow old."

"Nor be faithless, eh, Mr. Painter? True, true—a handsome woman; but give me warm flesh and blood rather than Venus herself in marble," said the other, glancing at Fritz and lifting his shoulders and his eyebrows as he spoke.

"What dost thou think of my ward, Franz?" said the Grand Duke when he met the painter later in the evening. "Come and let me present thee to her. Here she is. Dear child, this gentleman is a painter who will make thy face immortal if thou showest thyself amiable towards him. Franz, behold my ward, Countess Ida von Behn, come to turn all our heads."

Countess Ida's rather satirical hazel eyes took in the painter's comely presence in a moment, as also the painter's dispassionate criticism of herself.

"The gentleman's head seems to me to be quite in its right place as yet, sir," said she.

"Thank Heaven, madam, yes, and my heart too, I trust, for that matter," answered Mohr, bowing low and turning away; but he did not escape the Duke.

"What do you think of her?" said he, slipping his arm through Mohr's and drawing him apart. "Now, the truth."

"I think, sir, that the Countess Ida is woman enough to turn our heads, but scarce enough to turn our hearts."

"You think her cold. Believe me, she is by no means indifferent to admiration. She was piqued that you did not admire her."

"She honours me too much," said Mohr gravely.

"But surely you find her handsome?"

"Sir, her face would be very beautiful doubtless if her soul were not so ugly."

"You painters are mostly content with the face, and let the soul alone, my Franz. You talk like a priest, not like an artist."

"The greater pity for art, sir," said Mohr, "and the greater pity for men. If we looked with farther-reaching eyes we should no more admire a lovely face which covers an unlovely soul than we should the domino which concealed a hideous deformity."

"Thou Heaven! You are out of measure hard on poor Ida. She cannot help the men raving about her. She amuses herself and means no harm."

"The Count von Waffenheim amuses her greatly at this moment to all appearance," said Mohr rather shortly, frowning as he watched his pupil. Fritz and Ida were partners in a quadrille, and stood waiting their turn. She was plucking out the leaves of a rose she held and dropping them one by one on the floor, averting her head the while from Fritz who was speaking.

Poor Fritz's passion was only too obvious to Mohr; it betrayed itself in his eager eyes and pale cheeks; but (for it will, I suppose, surprise us to the end of our lives, to find how little people can see, even when we betray most) few of the gay crowd perceived that here was a tragedy going on before them.

The Countess Ida had been nearly two months in Saxe-Altenburg, and everyone knew that the Count von Waffenheim was one of her admirers, but so was almost everyone else, who yet ate and slept none the worse. They raved about her, certainly, but if they lay awake o' nights, 'twas from indigestion; no fair scornful face drifted between them and the moon.

The countess was the daughter of an old companion in arms of the Duke's father (who was a younger son, and had never expected the succession would lapse into his line). She was, however, almost young enough to be her guardian's daughter. She had a considerable fortune and large estates in Westphalia, besides that face, which would, said her admirers, have been in itself sufficient dowry for a queen.

I have said her "admirers;" I think, except poor Fritz, she had no lovers. I do not mean that there were not many men willing, nay, anxious to marry her; but we can only *love* souls. Let eyes be ever so beautiful, we soon forget their beauty for the sake of the soul which looks or does not look through them.

* * * * *

The next time Fritz went to the studio, he found the master working at a sketch for Kunigunde.

You can see for yourself, said the custos, what this beautiful countess was like. There she sits, goading her lover with her scornful smile. But that is not Fritz von Waffenheim. My father told me that Mohr twice painted out the figure of Delorges because it resembled himself; the third time the likeness was still apparent, but he let it remain, saying with a grim smile to my father: "Let her triumph so far if she will," and with one masterly touch he gave the knight's eyes that look of love fallen dead which you observed. My father was his pupil, and told me all that I tell you.

Then the custos went on to say that both the Duke and Fritz urged Mohr to ask the countess for a sitting.

"She will be flattered—she is dying for you to ask her," said the Duke. But Mohr refused.

"I will not beg a favour of one I am putting in the pillory."

"You carry your notions too far, Franz," said the Duke, a little huffed. "Here's the loveliest face we have ever seen in Saxe-Altenburg; the very face, too, for Kunigunde, you ought to do it justice, and from memory it is impossible."

But Mohr only said, "Sir, it is so great a reproach to her that hers is the face for Kunigunde, that I will not insult her by asking her to help me hold her up to public rebuke."

"Public rebuke! My dear fellow, she came here with me yesterday, hoping you would ask her to sit. She is as vain of your having taken her face as possible."

"I know it, sir. Had she shown any regret, I would have given my Kunigunde some other face. But since she is willing, I take hers—not ask it. Perhaps, some day, she will see how unbeautiful selfish vanity and scorn make a face."

So, though Ida came more than once to see the painter at his work, he never asked for a sitting.

The picture was finished. The Duke bought it and presented it to the gallery. Everyone said it was Mohr's masterpiece. The likeness to Countess Ida was recognised, to that haughty beauty's mingled satisfaction and disdain.

About this time the Grand Duke's cousin and heir-apparent returned from a year's travels in Italy, and brought with him the reputation of being the most accomplished *roué* for his age of any man east of the Rhine. Herein, perhaps, rumour was too flattering to the Margrave. He was probably no worse than many others; but man is a creature of a spirit so indomitable, that for the most part he prefers to exaggerate his misfortunes and sufferings, and even his sins, as feeling in himself more strength than any pains he endures demand.

But the Margrave of Lindenstein had made as much love and fought as many duels as could reasonably be expected of a young

man not yet six-and-twenty ; so that the very decided admiration he displayed for the Countess Ida filled all the other court ladies with envy, especially as Ida's wealth made it extremely likely that the Margrave was serious this time.

My father, said the custos—the gallery was growing very dim and Kunigunde's face was indistinct—was, except Mohr himself, the only intimate friend poor Fritz von Wassenheim had. They never talked together of Ida, except in the most indirect way, but my father generally knew pretty much how it fared with Fritz.

It was the end of August. Secret measures had long been in progress for war with France, and Fritz knew that any day orders might come to march. "If the King would wait for Russia, all might be well," he said to my father when they spoke, as they often did, of these things. "But if not, we shall be only sheep driven to the slaughter. For me, I ask no better than to strike one good blow for the fatherland, and then die, if need be. But for the others, it is a pity to throw their lives away."

One night, early in September, my father, who had strolled alone in the gardens of the Palace, and fallen asleep on a bench in a shady avenue, was awakened by voices close by. It was quite dark—he could scarcely at first even see the outlines of the two figures coming down the path, but he instantly recognised Fritz by his voice.

"Tell me you love him, and I go," he was saying. "Or even tell me he loves you. You know he is incapable of love. He marries you for your beauty ; but do you imagine he loves *you*, cares for your happiness ? Would himself endure a single pang for your sake ? When he is Grand Duke, you will adorn his court. At Vienna, you will seem more imperial than the Empress. Perhaps you will be a queen one day—who knows ? Do you think the Margrave would not sell his country for a crown ? You will reflect honour on him, and he will be proud—not of you—of himself. But love ! Do you think me presumptuous, selfish, to bid you think before you refuse my heart for his throne ? It is because I know you will be the most miserable of women as his wife that I speak. I love you, and that makes me more than his equal who does not, though he were an emperor. I am but a poor gentleman, it is true, but I have more to give you than he, and in your heart you know it !"

"You did not always speak so," said Ida, her voice not quite so full and steady as usual.

"It might have been better if I had," said Fritz. "But now that I am soon to look death in the face——"

By this time the speakers were out of ear-shot. My father had lain perfectly still, judging it better to play the involuntary eaves-dropper than to risk interrupting what might be a last interview. It was so. Next day came the order. Fritz went to the studio, and remained some time alone with Mohr. Then they two came here, and Fritz took his last look thus. Here the custos paused a moment,

and then went on to say that three weeks afterwards the Countess Ida was married to the Margrave, the marriage being thus hurried, it was said, lest the campaign should prove long; no one in Saxe-Altenburg dreamed that the Margrave was making sure of a rich bride with broad lands of her own, in case the worst came to the worst. Nor did anyone dream what a worst was to come.

Within a fortnight from the declaration of war, Jena was fought, and lost.

The news of that terrible day was brought to Saxe-Altenburg by a haggard messenger, whose jaded horse could scarcely carry him across the market-place.

There was consternation in Saxe-Altenburg on that windy October evening. All sorts of dreadful rumours got about of the vengeance the Emperor meant to take. The Prussian army was annihilated, and with it the hopes of Germany. The full extent of the disaster was not yet known, but it was reported that the Saxe-Altenburgers had suffered terribly. The Count von Waffenheim, who took the command when the senior officers had fallen, charged three times at the head of his men, and for a moment the issue of the battle was doubtful. But the Cuirassiers at last bore down all before them, and the battle became a rout. Some said Von Waffenheim fell in the final charge, others that he was mortally wounded. All agreed that he had shown the most desperate valour, and had done all that one man could to save the fortunes of the day. More news came soon enough. Magdeburg, Stettin, and Erfurt had yielded. Bonaparte in Berlin. Worst of all stubborn old "Vorwärts" himself, after fighting his way back to Lübeck, had there been compelled to capitulate.

Then came news of Fritz von Waffenheim. His servant returned, having escaped from Jena, whither he had carried his dying master after the battle.

Hid in an obscure house in Jena, the Count had lingered many days, attended by a French surgeon left in charge of some of the wounded, and by his faithful servant, who told his story to the painter on his way through Saxe-Altenburg to Schloss Waffenheim.

"He might have lived, of that I am sure," said the faithful fellow, the tears running down his face: "but for that thousand-times-cursed letter which came two days before the battle; after that came, I knew he would die in the battle. I saw it in his eyes, but he only said, 'Thou must tell them at home I did my best, Max.' And so he did—so he did."

Max gave the painter a message for the Margravine. No one ever knew what it was, but a great change was soon apparent in her. She lost all colour, and her beauty became more statuesque than ever. She had condescended to coquetry before her marriage, though only to such as a queen might have indulged in. Now there was something about her which awed the most flippant of her court, and made the boldest content to admire her at a distance.

Her court—for poor Fritz's prophecy was fulfilled almost before he was cold in his grave. The shock of the utter ruin of Jena brought on a violent attack of gout, which in less than a week made the Margrave a Grand Duke. He hastened to compound with the Emperor, and was graciously pardoned for the part the late Duke had taken in the campaign of Jena.

For a while the beautiful Grand Duchess queened it in Saxe-Altenburg. The new duke was believed to be intriguing with France to have his dukedom changed into a kingdom by a wave of that wand which had made thrones of so many mushrooms. Meantime he kept up a court whose splendour cast most of his predecessors into the shade.

When the campaign began, which ended at Wagram, the Grand Duke's neutrality was rewarded by the annexation of the Electorate of Lichtenstadt, with the title of Electoral Prince of Lichtenstadt-Waldberg. Half a loaf is better than no bread, and when one cannot be a King, it is better to be an Electoral Prince than a Grand Duke. But the new Elector felt himself so aggrieved by the Emperor's ingratitude, that he was beginning to intrigue cautiously with Austria, when the marriage of the Archduchess Maria-Louisa made him consider it on the whole safer to trust to what Napoleon might do for him yet.

The Prince Elector's wife had borne him one child, a son. Her health had gradually failed, and it was whispered that only his absolute commands prevented the Princess from ceasing to take part in the court gaieties.

Her beauty was still very remarkable, but so changed, that many declared they could not recognise her in Kunigunde. Lovers of the marvellous said that the Count von Waffenheim's last message preyed on her mind, and that, after hearing it, she never smiled. Mohr was the only person who could have disclosed the secret—if secret there were—of the Princess's premature decline, and he was not a person who could be asked to tell a secret.

So, whether Fritz sent his dying curse in that last message, whether his gory spectre stood every night at her bed's foot, whether remorse drove her to those long and fervent devotions, which so irritated her august spouse, and finally, whether or no, she was tormented by a constant longing to contemplate her own cruel and scornful face, and for that purpose had obtained a private key from Mohr, which admitted her by a secret door to the gallery—all this was mere conjecture. But there was no doubt that the Electoral Princess of Lichtenstadt-Waldberg, Margravine of Lindenstien, and in her own right Countess of Behn, was a most unhappy woman.

As the years went on, and her health failed completely, she gave herself to the performance of such good works as can be done by proxy. Sometimes of evenings a pale lady, leaning on the arm of a waiting-woman, walked in the shadiest avenue of the gardens, and

there, one evening, she sat down weary, on a bench, and sent her maid on some trifling errand, saying she would rest awhile.

The waiting-woman stayed for a moment's gossip with a fellow-servant, and then hurried back, with a sense of having delayed too long, though she had not been many minutes away. The Princess sat where she had left her, her head propped on her hand, and turned towards the other end of the avenue. And yet the waiting-woman screamed and ran for help—for help—but only to carry her lady's body back to the palace, for her soul had gone away—down the avenue perhaps—who knows?—to overtake Fritz and unsay the words she had said on a certain September night years and years ago.

"That is the story," said the custos, rising; "pardon that I have made it so long. They say the Princess could never bear to hear this picture of hers called beautiful, and that the only time she ever showed any joy after that message was once, not long before her death, when she overheard a little girl, the daughter of one of the palace servants, protesting to a companion that the lady in the picture was not in the least like the Princess."

RETROSPECTION.

THE day is over, and the night begun.
Another day, ah me, and I so ill
Have spent its golden hours, that onward spun,
Unstay'd, Ixion-like, by mortal will.
O beautiful Apollo! vanished sun!
I watch'd thy oriflame this morn, until—
In thy vast breeze-swept blue-arch'd temple—none
Could be more 'thrall'd of thee than I, or thrill
More to thy beauty! yea, I vowed to run
A race like thine to-day! said I would fill
Some darken'd soul with light mine own had won,
And warm some heart from misery grown chill.
But I more bravely spake than I have done;
'Neath Erebus I kneel, remorseful still!

ALICE MACKAY.

BROTHER BOLDERO'S CARRIAGE.

THE Brothers of St. Alloryx are twenty in number. On sunny days about a dozen of them muster on the benches under the South wall to discuss the politics of the Priory, and of the rest of the world.

The actual Monastery of St. Alloryx had been dissolved by Henry VIII. to the signal profit of his Royal pocket, but a pious founder in the subsequent times when founders flourished, bought the old building, with its cells and chapel, its refectory and its library, and instituted 'an honourable asylum for old gentlemen, to whom the gracious name of the Brotherhood of St. Alloryx still clung as a courtesy title. "Poor Brothers" had indeed been the original designation of the twenty old gentlemen, for the pious founder saw no disgrace in poverty resulting simply from misfortune, but as time went on, the Brotherhood came to resent this adjective and dropped it as objectionably personal; if any qualifying word were needed, they would have preferred "select."

For select they were, being chosen by Trustees of the Charity who scrutinized every case minutely before electing a Brother; not only must the candidate satisfy inquiries as to the causes of his loss of means and consequent application for membership, but he must commend himself to the governing body in appearance and demeanour, and come up to a certain standard of "Alloryx form" which existed in their minds. Consequently the Brothers were picked men, and talked less of the unpleasing accident of their poverty than of the advantageous certainty of their connexion with so old and so distinguished an Institution. When they sit in the sun, under the South wall, in the warmest angle of their Priory "quad," they look pleasant and gentlemanly old fellows enough, bearing their sixty, seventy or eighty years lightly; for once inside this haven of peace from worldly unrest, time goes at an even pace, leaving them, oftentimes, fresher and livelier than it found them on their first entrance.

And there is always the chance, for it has happened already—once to be strictly accurate—that even here in this quiet backwater, Fate has not quite forgotten their merits, and may perhaps— But that is the story of Brother Boldero's Carriage, and we must begin at the beginning.

Every now and then, a radiant flashing barouche with shining bay horses, and glittering brass harness and a brace of men-servants in chocolate livery, prances up to the gateway of the Priory, and crunching under its arch, draws up with a flourish and a sputter of

gravel in front of the Warden's door. Thomas in his long coat skips nimbly from the box, and throws open the carriage door; a handsome lady in sealskin and velvet, with sable-tails and other furry evidences of wealth, if it be winter-time, flounced parasol or satin fan in summer, descends on his arm, and waving her hand majestically to the other occupant of the barouche disappears beneath the Warden's portals. Then the tall thin gentleman with the sealskin collar of his overcoat turned up to his ears, who shares her seat, quickly unfastens his side of the carriage and jumping out a trifle stiffly, but without assistance from Thomas, hurries across to the South wall, and takes his place among the Brothers assembled there.

The stout lady calls him Berwyn, for his old family name recalling a proud Salopian connexion pleases her taste. Thomas and John Coachman call him "the kurnel"; but to the Brothers of St. Alloryx he is, and always will be, "Brother Boldero," in spite of his carriage.

This was how it came about. The Warden of St. Alloryx was a young man who, having in the discharge of his clerical duties met with an accident which left him lame, was appointed to the snug charge of the Priory with its historical chapel, its daily services morning and evening of twenty minutes' duration, and its twenty brothers' souls. Before Mr. Compton's time a much older and more conventional Warden had filled the office, but it seemed so peculiarly suitable to a lame person with literary tastes and a sympathetic nature that the governing body overlooked the fact of his youth and installed him and his wife Alice in the Warden's lodge, despite the grumbling of some of the Brothers who objected to having a boy, as they called him, set over them.

However, Mr. Compton—or, as he liked to be called, Mr. Warden—was no boy, except in a relative sense, being eight-and-thirty years of age, and with the assistance of his wife Alice, he made a very efficient head to the Priory, treating the Brothers with a tact and sympathy which even the most critical had to admit was beyond his years. He had a cheery face and voice, and the old-fashioned drone of his predecessor was no loss when you came to think of it. He made the chapel services cheerful and his ten minutes' sermons interesting; while Alice, his wife, ran in and out of the Brothers' quarters, tapping at their doors with bunches of flowers from her greenhouse and invitations to tea in her drawing-room, which gave a new aspect to the social life of the Priory altogether.

Alice Compton, who was not long married, had numbers of girl friends and younger sisters, who also soon began to flutter about the priory, and on the Wardeness's "at home" day, when the Brothers were welcomed to tea and cake and chatter at the lodge, there were always several of these young ladies to hand the cups, play or sing afterwards, and generally to make the little reunion "go off." Again one or two of the crustiest old gentlemen grumbled—as some folks will grumble at anything that is new—but the majority liked it and

gallantly confessed to so doing, and crowded week after week to Mrs. Compton's teas, forgetting rheumatism and bronchial tendencies and other grievances in this mild excitement, as they had never forgotten them during old Mr. Batchelor's wardenship.

Besides these informal teas, which were open to all without special invitation, there was an inner ring among the Brothers who were on still more intimate terms with the Comptons, and were sometimes asked to dinner. Among these the foremost was Brother Boldero, who had been colonel of a regiment in which a relation of the Warden's wife had served. This tie held fast, though poor young Charlie Craven had long ago died of yellow fever, and Colonel Boldero, the victim of misplaced confidence in a brother officer's honour, had become a "Poor Brother" of St. Alloryx' Priory. Chance had thrown Alice Compton across the path of poor Charlie's often-quoted "colonel," and there was not a more honoured guest at the Warden's table than Brother Boldero. Especially when any members of the Craven family visited the lodge was he pressed to join the party, and in his carefully-kept dress-suit and immaculate tie and shirt-front, his waxed moustache and seal ring, which conspicuously quartered the Berwyn and Boldero arms on a handsome bloodstone, and with that indescribable mixture of ease and alertness of manner which can only be dubbed "military," because nothing else explains it, he made a dinner guest of whom any table and company might have been proud.

Among the Craven relatives was an aunt of Alice Compton's and of the poor young Charlie who had died at Jamaica; a single lady, no longer young, but of such easy fortune that she was able to gratify every whim as it occurred to her, and consequently felt the passing of time less than some of us, on whom he marks his flight by renunciations.

Whenever Miss Craven visited her niece Alice, Colonel Boldero was bidden to meet her, and as she had a pretty taste in antiquities, and was particularly occupied with researches into the history of St. Alloryx and his Priory—being æsthetically High Church at this time and devoted to abstruse saint-lore—they had much pleasant converse together on subjects of mutual interest.

The Colonel exercised his body over bowls on the quad green, and his mind in piecing together the priory records from the remote times when the real monks of the shadowy St. Alloryx had reigned in its cloisters. That they had been military monks and their patron originally a crusader was a source of great pride to him, and the discoveries which he made, or imagined, about the past glories of the house were equally interesting to Miss Craven, who herself came of a soldiering family. The old library furnished stories of unguessed-at information, which Brother Boldero never tired of condensing and collating, and Miss Craven going, as she frequently did, to the quiet reading-room to exchange a magazine (for modern periodical literature

was liberally represented on a special table), would frequently stop to puzzle over a passage which baffled the Colonel in old Norman-French, and only yield to her woman's knack of putting two and two together.

From these researches sprang also investigations of the antiquities of the neighbourhood, for the Priory stands in an old-fashioned London suburb where the impress of mediæval influences still lingers in out-of-the-way corners; and once the lady had permitted herself to be persuaded to partake of a cup of tea in the Colonel's parlour after one of these expeditions. Brother Boldero brewed this pleasing refreshment in a deft and dainty manner, and brought out a tin of fresh biscuits from his buttery. By his own simple enjoyment of the little act of hospitality he invested it with a special charm.

Miss Craven walked across to the Warden's lodge afterwards in the gathering dusk with a smile upon her comely face; she had forbidden her entertainer to escort her across the quadrangle, and left him preparing to wash up his best tea-cups to the shrill, sweet notes of the *Faust* waltz, which was a favourite when the Colonel was a dancing man, and which he often whistled when he was in good spirits, very ably and artistically, with a lot of little florid twists and twirls.

Miss Craven was leaving her niece's house on the morrow for her own home in Bayswater.

"I will see him again before I go," she said to herself as she entered the Warden's hall, and though the smile still lingered in her eyes, her mouth was very firmly pressed together.

The Warden was sitting in his study next day when Brother Boldero was announced. The Brothers were in the habit of consulting their head upon all sorts of little points, and his sympathetic nature had quite outweighed the disadvantage of his youth by this time.

"A paper to sign?" queried the Warden, as his visitor did not speak at once.

Some of the Brothers had small business affairs which required his co-operation; others came with social difficulties, infinitesimal in themselves, but of considerable importance in the little community, where the Warden's tact counted for a final appeal with everybody.

"Not a paper, sir, but I wanted to consult you on a private matter."

It was not like Brother Boldero to hesitate; he was too simple-minded to pick and choose his words, as a rule, and too humble to be self-conscious; yet to-day, before the young clergyman who might have been his son, he stammered and stopped short.

"Yes," said the Warden encouragingly.

"You know my position," Colonel Boldero went on, after a minute's consideration. "I have been a man of the world, sir" (the Warden smiled behind his hand), "and my present misfortunes are owing—not that I have the right to speak of anything as a misfortune that lands me in so happy a haven as St. Alloryx——" He broke off,

and his companion could see that, though he tried to assume an easy manner, the fingers that grasped his bamboo cane were trembling.

"We all know what brought Colonel Boldero of the —th into the Priory of St. Alloryx," said the Warden gently, laying his hand for a moment on that of his companion. "It was not quite for qualities which go to the making of what passes for a man of the world. Nevertheless, a few more such qualities would do none of us any harm. You say I know your position here. Well, I may say I do, and if I were asked to define it I should say it was that of the best man among us."

Brother Boldero grasped the Warden's hand and stammered, "Oh, no"; but he did not seem to be any nearer getting to his business, and again Mr. Compton tried to give him a lead.

"Was it anything about that old misfortune, the man's treachery which deprived you of all your means, that you wanted to speak to me?"

"Yes—no—that is, not exactly, but indirectly, sir—indirectly. Perhaps you do not know, and I should like the communication to be confidential, that the man whose bill I backed and who landed me in this mess was my own brother."

"You don't say so? No, I had no idea of that, and I don't think it is generally known. We knew that just after you left the service you assisted a brother officer in a money difficulty, and that he deceived you and left you to bear the penalty, which cost you your entire fortune; but that it was your own brother I never guessed."

"That is where the dishonour comes in."

"Not at all—not at all," corrected the Warden hastily. "That is a false, morbid conclusion which no healthy-minded man should entertain for an instant. Even if you had not stood by your unhappy brother in the way you did, no shadow of dishonour could attach to you, a blameless, right-living gentleman, had all your family turned out swindlers. As it was, your ready and willing sacrifice goes far to cover his sin and to make us believe that there must be extenuating circumstances to plead for one who shared your blood. My dear fellow"—as the colonel was about to speak—"put away that silly clap-trap sentiment of the sensational novel which weighs honest and innocent people down through three volumes with guilt that is not their own. Do you mean to tell me that if I confessed to you that my grandfather had been hung at Tyburn you would think the worse of me, Arthur Compton, here to-day? No, I thought not. Then reverse the case and deliver yourself once and for all from this bug-bear of your brother's misdemeanour. Is that all you came to tell me?"

"Not all, but it bears upon it. You would not, then, consider this dishonourable fact a drawback to my entering into new relationships—to making new ties—that is—to getting married, in fact?"

The Warden could not restrain a little gasp of astonishment.

Marriage and the Brotherhood had hitherto had no connection. By the founder's will the twenty beneficiaries of his bounty were all single men, and their entrance-age being sixty years, they had so far remained single ever after—at least, within the memory of man; but covering his surprise, the reverend gentleman answered demurely:

"Certainly not."

"Not even to entering, say, your own family?"

"My own family or any other"—as stoutly as his perturbed feelings would allow him to speak.

Was Brother Boldero going mad? was the thought uppermost in his mind. The quiet, eventless life of the Priory might have told upon the spirits of a man who had hitherto mixed in society and followed a stirring profession. Monomania was not unknown in the Brotherhood, though, thanks to the cheerful new influences of the Compton reign, it was far less common than it had been in old Mr. Batchelor's time. The Warden hazarded a question which he felt was crucial.

"You are thinking of leaving us and of marrying, Colonel?"

After a slight pause:

"It has been suggested," said the Colonel dubiously.

There could be no doubt that this was monomania. Much brooding over a solitary life and a fancied disability must have crazed Brother Boldero on this one point, for all that he sat looking like a completely sane though somewhat perturbed old gentleman of military distinction in front of the Warden of St. Alloryx. It was fortunately a harmless illusion, and one which a little gentle dissuasion from the clergyman might brush aside altogether.

"You have perhaps come into a little money, which makes you once more independent of the Brotherhood," he suggested pleasantly.

"And no doubt with renewed means comes the recollection of some lady whom you have known and liked, and whom you could now ask to share——"

"No, no," interposed his companion, "nothing of the sort!"

The Warden persisted. "If you are to deal with an illusion, you must, at least, know in what direction, and to what extent, it has gone. But you are intending to ask some lady."

"No, no," again interrupted Brother Boldero, nervously clutching the table edge, and staring at Mr. Compton with frank, eager, blue eyes, which though a trifle faded, had retained their look of childish candour. "I am not going to ask any lady—that—that isn't necessary! I thought you might have seen—but then I didn't see it myself! The fact is, sir—I must ask you once again to consider my communication confidential—the lady is Miss Craven, your wife's aunt."

"And you have asked her to marry you?"

"No, sir—she has asked me."

That this was no illusion of a solitary and overtaxed brain, the

Warden very soon decided. A very real and eloquent blush spread itself over Brother Boldero's bronzed cheeks as he made the announcement of Miss Craven's proposal; in a flash, his hearer remembered a hundred little symptoms in Miss Craven's conduct which pointed to unusual excitement during the last few days—that very morning she had paid a hurried visit to the library, ten minutes before the carriage which was to convey her home to Bayswater was due, and returning in a flutter with her gold eyeglasses dangling down the middle of her sealskin back, had spoken of her portmanteau as her "Boldero" and called John Coachman, "Colonel."

"It was in the library this very morning?" the Warden ventured delicately; and Brother Boldero, giving his nose a stupendous and flourishing blow behind his China silk handkerchief, was understood to whisper "Yes."

What could the Warden say? He was fond of the gentle old soldier, who, as a man of the world or Poor Brother of St. Allorix, was uniformly courteous, honest, and single-minded; also he knew better than to attempt to baulk his wife's aunt in any of her whims. He shook hands with his uncle elect, and advised him to go over to Bayswater to tea, and the Colonel blushed again, and stammered, "You really advise me? You think it suitable, then?" in broken snatches of happy confusion, of which "You know I told her that I could not accept until I knew how her family would regard my unfortunate past history," was not the least touching.

Finally with another hand-shake he started for Bayswater to put Miss Craven out of suspense, and as he remained to tea and dinner and was only home just in time to avert "lock-out," we may presume that his reception was in every way favourable.

Moreover the seal ring with the Berwyn and Boldero arms was gone from his finger thenceforward, and a magnificent diamond has taken its place.

Only those who know Alice Compton, or ladies of her stamp, can guess at the satisfaction with which she superintended her aunt's *trousseau* and marriage ceremony. The bride still comes very frequently to consult her more experienced niece in matters domestic.

"I expect newly married men are always a little shy, and want tactful handling at first," says Mrs. Boldero, sinking into an arm-chair in the drawing-room at the Warden's lodge. "Tell me, Alice, does Arthur ask you to play the piano of an evening when you are alone, or do you just do it whether or no?"

And meanwhile, under the South wall among the Brothers, Brother Boldero is listening to the old gossip of the Priory. How Brother Stokes has won the Bowls Challenge prize; how Brother Chaffin fell asleep in chapel and was locked in all night; how Brother Tufnell had given a "wine," with whisky and water and cigarettes on the occasion of being re-chosen President of the Whist Club. The old life seems very peaceful and sunshiny as he looks back on it now;

there is more stir at Bayswater, more novelty, and "Amelia is a fine woman, God bless her!" But those quiet years at the Priory were very happy in their way. He would like to try his hand at bowls, but his big fur overcoat is not convenient for any but carriage exercise, and the Whist Club meetings would scarcely meet with Amelia's approval—just yet!

When Thomas sees his mistress approaching, he lets down the carriage steps with a clatter and the Colonel hastens across the green to rejoin his wife.

All the Brothers follow him with their eyes; they rise and bow as the carriage passes out. They are as proud of it as if it were their own. They think Brother Boldero the bravest and cleverest of men to have wooed and won so desirable a lady, and each in his elderly heart feels quite sure that if—that when—such a chance comes to him he will do likewise.

G. B. STUART.

RESEMBLANCE.

FROM SULLY PRUDHOMME.

WHY do I love you? 'Tis in truth
No mystery,
For you remind me of my youth—
Of days gone by.

Sometimes you shed unmeaning tears—
You smile and sigh—
And this is like the hopes and fears
Of days gone by.

You are as fair as Spring is fair,
Or moonlit sky,
Or like the perfume in the air
Of days gone by.

My sweetest thoughts would bid you stay,
But rapidly
You pass unheeding on your way,
Like days gone by.

C. E. MEETKERKE.

IN THE NIGHT-WATCHES.

By CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "LETTERS FROM MAJORCA," "MEMORIALS OF MRS. HENRY WOOD," ETC. ETC.



THE LAND'S END.

"ALL'S well that ends well," said Sir Fred, as the engines were once more set in motion and we found ourselves parting company with the land.

Ebbe's Fleet, with its grey stone monument erected in honour of St. Augustine, was fading in the moonlight. We had had our dream of the great missionary; imagined his first meeting with Ethelbert; seen king and reformer depart, hand-in-hand for the great Roman fortress of Richborough, the silver cross before them. We had searched for the footprint of St. Mildred, patron saint of Thanet, and found it not. It was placed on a rock, and if

removed was said to have the power of flying back to its resting-place. On this occasion it had flown to some other spot, for we looked in vain. It has also been called the footprint of Augustine: an old-world legend found in many countries. How many impressions has St. Jago left in Spain—not "writ in sand or water," but on solid rock, defying time and the elements. Again, Adam's footprint in Ceylon—where the garden of Eden might well have stood, since the ancient coffee island is one of the loveliest spots on earth. There is the footprint of Mahomet in the exquisite Mosque of Omar, on which we have many a time gazed, though not with the awe and wonder that fill the followers of the False Prophet. How well we remember each returning visit to that wonderful mosque, on one occasion accompanied by Osman, himself too enlightened to treat with anything but indifference the railed-in footprint. The world is full of these legends and impressions: and we know how, on another and very different occasion, a footprint affected that boyish hero of romance—Robinson Crusoe. Here, indeed, it was "writ in sand," and there was nothing saintly or miraculous about it.

We had left Ebbe's Fleet without finding the footprint of St. Mildred—not quite clear as to the special virtues that distinguished her.

"All's well that ends well," said Sir Fred, as we stood upon the deck watching the passing of the land.

"True. But the chough and crow to which you just now referred have been roosting many a good hour," smiled the canon. "They must be almost ready to take wing again."

"Like the mysterious bird of omen that has puzzled us all! My dear canon, I feel it was a banshee."

"Or your family ghost in a new form," laughed the canon. "I daresay they can assume any shape they like on occasion, since they are all insubstantial as shadows."

"We are approaching the regions of the Psychical Society," said Sir Fred; "a society that, as far as I can see, has unearthed some interesting ghost-stories, but proved nothing."

"I am quite of that opinion," returned the canon; "and so you may easily be brought to putting faith in my assertion that signs and omens, ghosts and apparitions are non-existent."

"I don't know. Dr. Johnson, the wise and learned, declared that mere reason was confounded by the weight of evidence."

"He would hardly have said so in these days," said the canon. "His was still a superstitious age. Men are more enlightened now."

"You mean they believe in nothing," returned Sir Fred. "Rather than that give me superstition."

"Heaven forbid that men should believe in nothing," cried the canon. "But mere superstition leads to nowhere, and——"

"At least it leads to the land of ghosts," interrupted Sir Fred, with a laugh. "And I don't see why we shouldn't put faith in them and cultivate them, since the day must come when we shall be ghosts ourselves. How runs the old Somersetshire rhyme?"

"As us am, so must you be,
Therefore prepare to follow we."

"A terrible confusion of pronouns!" laughed the canon.

"But typical of the Somersetshire people," returned Sir Fred. "If, however, you really wish to have your teeth set on edge, you must go to the Worcestershire folk. The way they arrange their sentences is so ingeniously clumsy as to become quite a fine art. But as I said just now, let us go down and refresh the inner man: and if we cannot emulate the chough and crow, we will follow the example of the owls. By-the-way, when I really buy a yacht, I will call it *The Owl*. The Night-Watches are passing away. Mr. Hurst, you will bring-to in Rye Bay, and we will land and explore the wonders of that old-world little town."

When we all stood on deck some hours later, a slight breeze was blowing off the sea; the sky was still cloudless, the sun hot and

glowing; the water, flashing in the sunlight, caught the blue of the heavens; gulls wheeled about the yacht with clang and scream, asking to be fed: reminding us of past days when amidst the rocks and seas of Shetland, not tens, but thousands of these lovely creatures would wheel, flash and clang, darkening the air with their numbers.

We were at anchor in Rye Bay, before us the low shores; where the three rivers, Rother, Brede and Tillingham, having flowed into each other higher up, empty themselves as one stream into the sea. The outlines of Rye, old-world and unmistakable in their beauty and quaintness, were crowned by the church. To-day, the place has been much spoiled. Splendid old houses have been pulled down, giving place to terrible modern erections and the necessities of "golf links." The whole place, as it then stood, should have been taken in hand by Government and turned into a national monument, after the manner of that admirable French Society given up to "*Les Monuments Historiques*." Rye was one of the few remaining places in England to take us back into the past, and ought to have been sacred to chance and change.

"What a glorious morning," exclaimed the canon, who came up looking as refreshed and invigorated as though he had had a long night's rest. "This breeze sets everything sparkling and dazzling. And there stands my dear old Rye, the most picturesque spot in all England. What time do we land, Sir Fred?"

"I think the sooner the better," was the reply; "before the great heat of the day comes on. We shall not find this breeze on shore, I fear."

"And a toil up that steep and crooked street will be a tug-of-war," laughed the canon. "But there is no escaping it. To pass Rye unvisited would be a crime. We know not how soon the Philistines may come down upon the place and ruin it. Nothing is sacred to Vandalism, and my only wonder is that Rye, so far, has been spared."

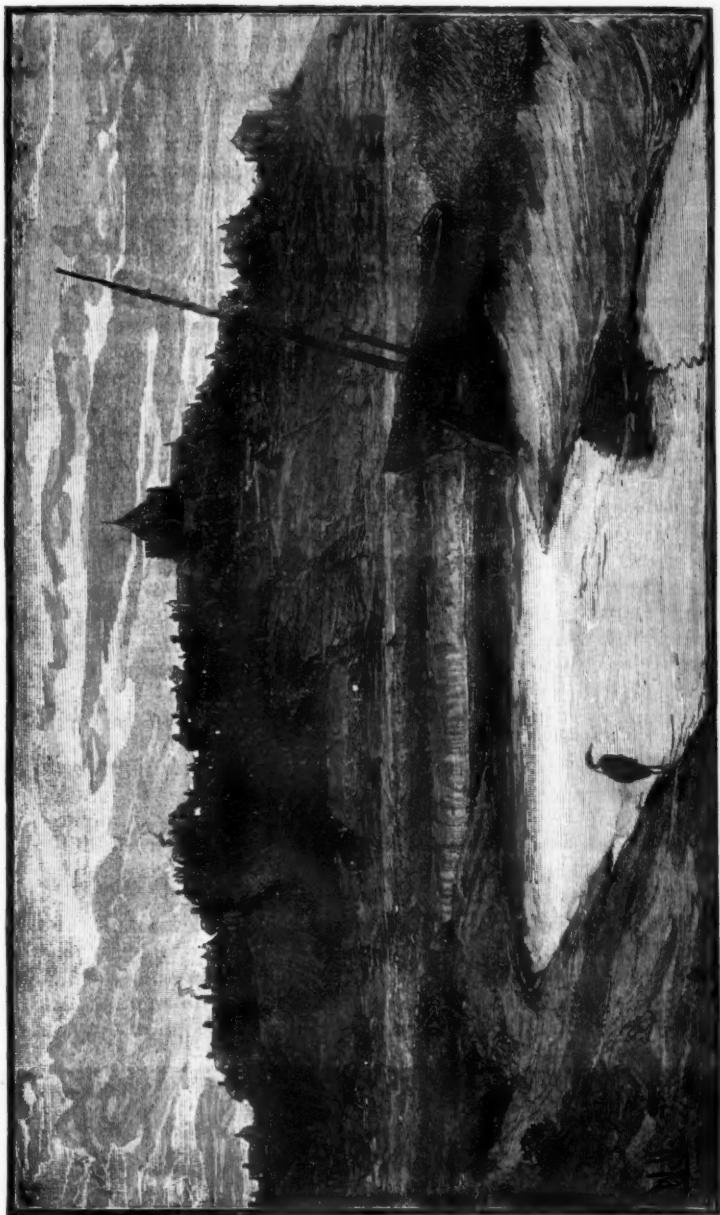
Before long the launch had taken us quietly up the river, and we found ourselves on dry land overlooking the picturesque harbour. Above us rose the outlines of the town, tier above tier of houses, with ancient roofs, sloping and red-tiled: all so foreign-looking, it was difficult to imagine oneself in England.

"It is some years since I set foot on these shores," said the canon as we commenced the steep climb to the upper part of the town.

"And I never," returned Sir Fred. "To me it is all new ground."

"Then you have an antiquarian treat in store," cried the canon. "I almost envy you; just as I envy those who have never read Scott's novels. What a revelation they are, when read for the first time. What a new world of enchantment they open up! Ah! here we come to these wonderful old houses. Are they not picturesque?"

"I had no idea England could produce anything of the kind," said Sir Fred, both surprised and delighted.



Rye.

The old houses stretched on either side, gabled and overhanging with latticed panes, quaint and irregular. A remarkable assemblage, full of colouring, wonderfully placed.

"There is an ancient kitchen in a place where I have occasionally stayed," said the canon, pointing to one of the oldest and quaintest of the houses. "Let us enter and see if the old woman who kept the house still lives."

Without ceremony the canon led the way through a passage into a large old-fashioned room that carried us into the past centuries: a room with an immense open fireplace at one end, where one could almost roast a sheep. The high mantel-piece almost touched the ceiling; dark beams ran across; the walls were panelled. At the further end on the left was a long, low, latticed window, in which stood a few flower-pots. Near the fireplace sat an old woman, quaint and picturesque as the room itself, looking as if she too had come down with the centuries. Early in the day as it was, a cup of tea was in her hand, the teapot stood on the long deal table in the middle of the room, the kettle sang on the hob, and a cat had curled round on a stool on the hearth. A cheerful fire blazed in the grate, and as nothing could add to the outside heat, it did not seem out of place. It was a picture of quiet domestic peace and comfort.*

As soon as the old woman—who was dressed in the perfection of neatness, including a wonderful white cap—caught sight of the canon, she got up out of her old-fashioned chair and dropped a curtsey worthy of the Middle Ages.

"I did not expect the pleasure of seeing your reverence to-day," she said. "It is some years since you were here, sir, and I have often wondered whether you would ever come again."

"My home is not now in your neighbourhood, Mrs. Makepeace," replied the canon. "I can no longer indulge in flying visits to these charming old spots. Had anyone said to me yesterday morning I should pay my respects to Rye to-day, they would have heard that they were mistaken. And you are still here—and unchanged—leading the same quiet life as of old, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; there is little change in Rye, and in me only the ageing of a few years. My life is quiet and happy, and the gentlemen who come and lodge with me give me just enough work to pass away the time. But I fear all this is to come to an end. I have been told that some of these old houses are to be pulled down, and new ones built up. If so, I shall be turned out. Old trees don't bear uprooting: and if all this comes to pass, it will kill me. I shall

* This wonderful old room, worthy a pilgrimage, exists no longer. It was pulled down together with the house to give place to a hideous modern erection, where reposing in every corner golf clubs may be seen, and golf talk heard. It literally broke the old woman's heart to be turned out of the home she had known and loved for years, and she too has passed into the land of shadows—the Land o' the Leal.

die, sir, as surely as that I am now speaking to you. If you have any influence or authority with the powers, whoever they may be, can you not save the place, at any rate until after I am gone?"

"Alas," returned the canon, "no interest public or private can avert desecration, once the decree has gone forth. But I trust



A FISHING FLEET.

that in this case it is a false rumour. The world would cry shame if our beautiful Rye were interfered with. I cannot think it will ever come to that. And yet—the English are undoubtedly Vandals, and I firmly believe would pull down Westminster Abbey if they could, if anything was to be gained by it."

Poor Mrs. Makepeace groaned and sank into her chair, put on a certain amount of rigidity, and a far-away look in her large brown eyes.

"I see it coming," she said, looking through the flower-pots and window to the blue sky beyond, the intent, far-away gaze taking a more rapt expression. "I see a vision of a new house and noisy people, and I see myself carried to the churchyard, where alone there is rest. There are no mourners, and only a few neighbours follow me out of kindness, whilst eight old sailors carry me to the grave who before long will all pass themselves through the dark valley. I see it all. I am Scotch, you know, sir," rousing herself, "and my people have the second sight, and I have it too. I saw my marriage, I saw my husband's death, I have seen the death of others, all before they happened. And now this also will happen."*

"We must trust not," returned the canon. "Hope for the best as long as you possibly can. Half the trouble of life arises from the dread of evils that never occur—an experience old as the hills. These ancient houses are the pride of Sussex and belong to the antiquities of England."

"And it is said, your reverence, that we may not remove our ancient landmarks," said Mrs. Makepeace; "and surely with my eighty-five years I am one of them," she pathetically added.

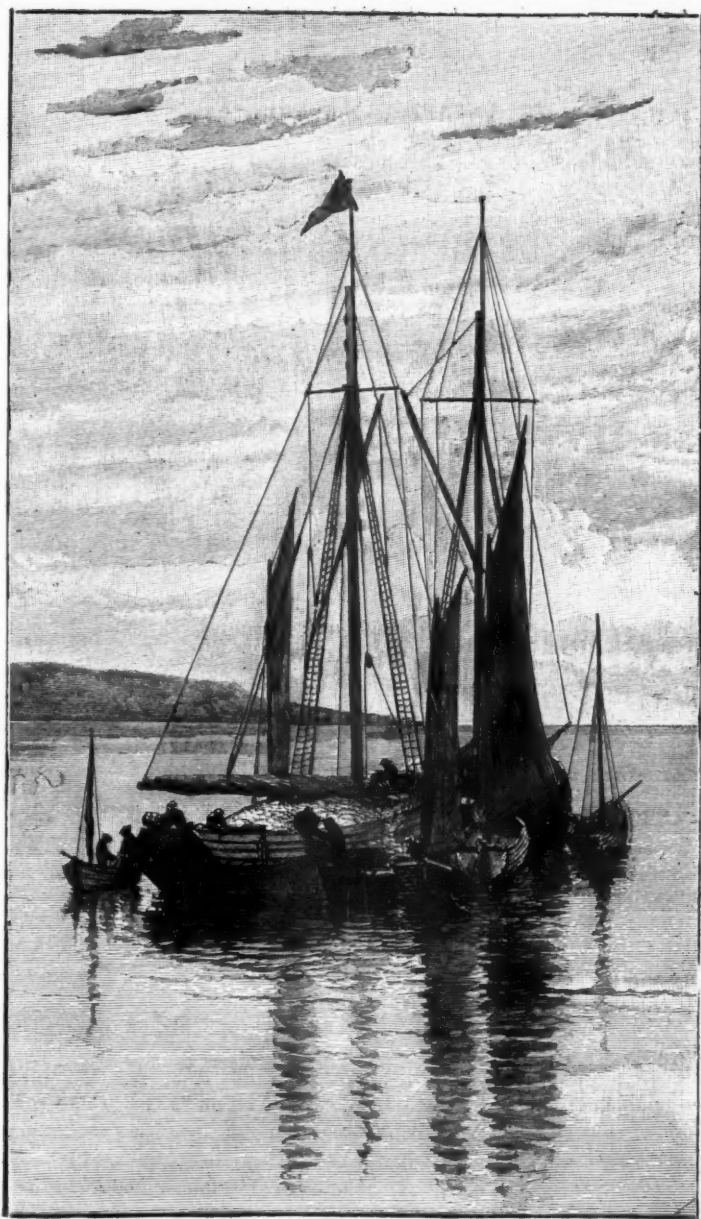
We left the old lady to her dreams and visions, and went out to further examine the quaintness of the place. Standing where we did, at the top of the steep and rugged street, it was a very remarkable vision. On either hand were the ancient houses, with their cross-beams, overhanging gables, and irregular lattice windows. Below them the sea of houses with their red roofs reposed on the slopes, the smoke coming from many a chimney throwing a slight misty and artistic veil about them. We went round to the old church which crowns the hill, and is said to be the largest parish church in England, though probably yielding to Yarmouth and Hull.

"Whether largest or not, its interest is undoubted," said the canon. "As you see, it is of different periods. The oldest part is the central tower, which is early Norman. So are the transepts and circular arches opening into them."

"A variety of styles probably due to invasions?" said Sir Fred.

"Yes. Over and over again the French came down upon Rye and Winchelsea, doing much damage. Old Winchelsea was especially doomed to misfortune. First of all it was destroyed by the sea: and where old Winchelsea once stood, the waves now beat. Then the new town was founded on higher ground by Edward I. This it was that the French so repeatedly sacked, until at last the glory of

* Mrs. Makepeace's prophecy was certainly fulfilled, whatever the reader may think of the vision. But that certain rare beings of Celtic origin have this gift of second sight, or some mysterious power answering to it, the writer does not doubt.



A GOOD HAUL.

Winchelsea departed, and it has fallen upon quiet and neglected days."

"A very lovely spot all the same," said Sir Fred, looking across the marshy plain to the opposite hill.

We were now sitting not far from the church, and the scene lay spread before us. In the plain below, the sea came up and the river had overflowed into meadows that were wonderfully green and velvety. Below us were the red roofs of the houses composing the town or village of Rye; a certain amount of boat-building was going on, full of a picturesque element. Beyond was the harbour. Far away the sea stretched, blue and shimmering, fading in the horizon. Across the plain rose the hill of Winchelsea, defying as it were its rival Rye, than which it was far less beautiful in outline. The whole scene held a marvellous charm. The breeze we had found on the sea did not extend inland; the day was absolutely calm, the heat excessive.

"Surely this will all end in a convulsion of nature?" said Sir Fred.

"Hush!" cried the canon; "there is an old saying that to foretell is to make happen: and if there be such a thing as superstition, for me it lies in that sentence."

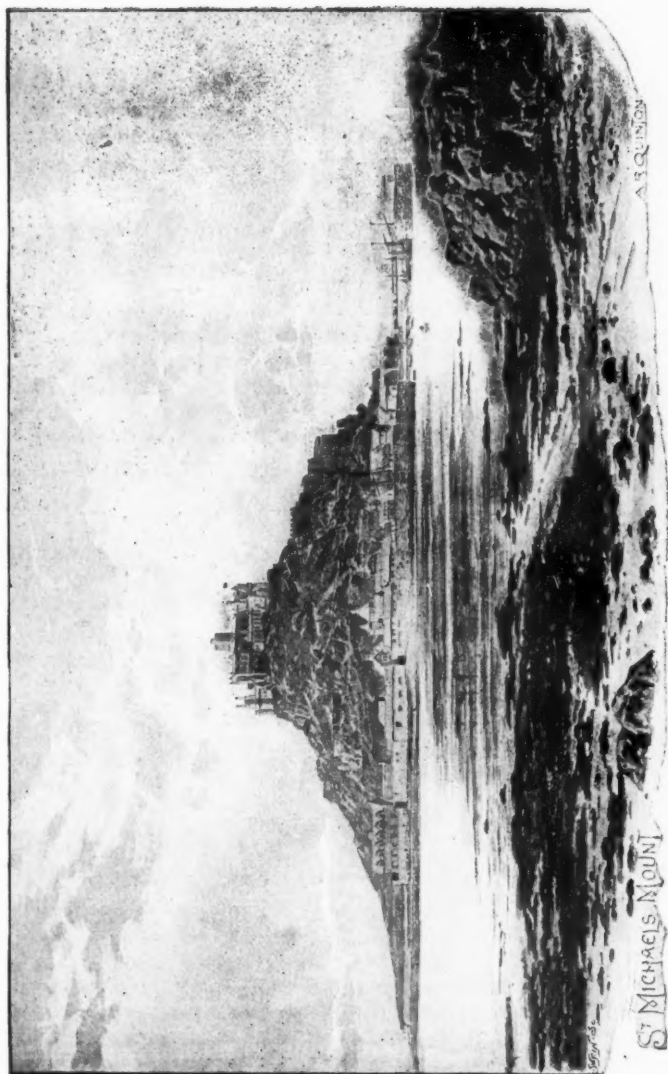
"Ah ha!" laughed Sir Fred; "are we finding out your heel of Achilles, my dear canon? Before long we shall hear that you have had an omen."

"Yes, even Achilles had his vulnerable spot," laughed the canon. "And I confess that I have once or twice in my life met people gifted with second sight. I believe that old dame Mrs. Makepeace has slightly infected me. Undoubtedly she has set me thinking—wondering what can be done to preserve this little corner of a dead-and-gone world sacred from innovators, links, golf clubs, and their destructive accompaniments. Did you notice the brooding look in the old dame's eyes as she described her vision?"

"She appeared to be looking into the very heaven itself," said Sir Fred. "It was almost a mesmeric or hypnotic state—a science of whose garment we touch only the very fringe, knowing nothing about it; what it is, what capable of, where it will lead to. Some day, I believe, to the discovery of miracles and a new state of being with supernatural possibilities. By the way—to change the subject—was not Winchelsea one of the Cinque Ports?"

"In a measure, yes," returned the canon quickly, as though glad to harp on more congenial themes. "The Cinque Ports proper were Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Hastings and Romney. To these were added Rye and Winchelsea—vide the Child's Guide to Knowledge," he laughed. "But these five ports possessed numerous 'members' all anxious to share in the privileges given to them. These ports had, however, to pay for their privileges, having to furnish fifty-seven vessels to be at the service of the king (it began with Henry III.), at any time that he might want them."

"This, I suppose, formed part of the Royal Navy?" said Sir Fred.



"Yes. The number furnished by our little Rye was five vessels : Dover sent twenty-one. The sailors had their distinguishing dress : a coat of white cotton, with a red cross, and the arms of the ports underneath it—half lion, half ship. The red cross was the royal badge. Of the harbours, Hastings, Romney and Hythe have ceased to exist ; Sandwich is of no moment ; Dover alone retains importance. There," said the canon, sweeping his hand across the plain, "you see the beginning of Romney Marsh. You remember the division of the world : Europe, Asia, Africa, America—and Romney Marsh. It is too near Rye and Winchelsea to admit of these picturesque spots being healthy. Fever and ague must haunt the marshes—those Jack o' lanterns from which there is no escaping. On the other side the Rother, at the entrance to Romney Marsh is the church of East Guldeford, which at times can only be approached by water, so that people would have to go to church in a procession of boats if they went at all on such occasions."

"As they do in Norway," said Sir Fred. "Only there it would be far more picturesque, with the costumes of the people and the savage splendour of the scenery."

"Ah, Sir Fred, you have the advantage of me," said the canon. "Norway to me is an unknown land. For many a year it was a dream of my life to visit it : now it is too late."

"I don't see why," returned Sir Fred. "You are in good health and fair vigour, and nothing is easier in these days than a trip to Norseland."

"Nevertheless I see as in a vision"—deliberately throwing a far-away look into his eyes : "I see as in a vision that it will never be. For me the silver cord is loosening, however little people may suspect it. I have had warnings."

"Warnings ?" cried Sir Fred, arrested by the word. "Warnings ? I thought, my dear canon, you didn't believe in them !"

The canon flushed slightly as though self-convicted, but was equal to the occasion.

"Ah, my dear Sir Fred, my warnings are *material*. It is only the supernatural to which I take exception. Our material warnings are often only too substantial and too unmistakable. How pretty the *Daphne* looks from here."

She was lying at anchor in the bay, sun flashes playing about her ; the whole scene one of peace and beauty. We were surrounded by historical associations : signs of the past met us on every side.

"There is no more interesting ground in England than this. The whole district is beautiful," said the canon. "What can be more charming than the waves and undulations of the South Downs, as lovely in their way as anything in the world. How they delighted White of Selborne. He was never tired of his excursions amidst them, and every fresh visit brought out new beauties. But many of



ENTRANCE TO FOWEY HARBOUR.

the birds once found in abundance have gone. The wheatear is never seen—thanks to the hand of man. The bustard is extinct. Then there was the shepherd peculiar to the South Down, who belonged to a race apart, and lived in caves lined with straw, like the hermits of old. It is said that you may yet occasionally come upon him on remote hill-sides, but I have never done so. The shepherd's trade still descends from father to son, like an entailed inheritance. It was also a great place for smugglers, but those days are over—there is nothing left to smuggle. There were large gangs of them, a terror to the country side. Hawkhurst was one of their central points. In Winchelsea there lived two brothers named Weston, who not only smuggled by sea but robbed by land. For years they were unsuspected, and lived in the odour of respectability. At length they were caught in London, after robbing the Bristol coach, and hanged at Tyburn. This was only in 1782. We have certainly advanced since the century was young."

"It seems to me there is as much crime as of old," said Sir Fred, "but it is of a different nature. There is less of the 'your money or your life' way of going to work—though quite enough of that, thanks to the mistaken leniency of our judges, who 'spare the cat and save the burglar'—to parody the old saying. Crime is not so much that of the highwayman in these days—which after all had its picturesque side: it is more subtle and concealed, and far more dangerous: a fine art, and education is brought to bear upon it. I always affirm that to educate the people intellectually without at the same time raising their moral tone, is simply paying a premium to crime. So your highwayman has given way to your murderer and forger, to your scientific burglar, to your false promoter of public companies. Yes, the latter most especially, for that sows ruin and misery broadcast over the land."

"A comprehensive sweep indeed," smiled the canon; "but I think I agree with you. However, we who are not judges and magistrates cannot alter these things, and so we will, amidst such heavenly scenes dismiss the thought of crimes and people that certainly were not made for heaven."

In this manner and in paying such visits the days and the nights passed. Now and then we passed a fishing fleet putting out to sea, or a solitary boat that, detached from its comrades, was returning with a full freight. These, more than larger, more formidable and less picturesque craft, disputed with us the sovereignty of the home waters.

It would be impossible to enumerate the spots at which we landed, sometimes in the night-watches, sometimes under the broad noonday sun. We should need a volume to recount all the antiquarian lore with which the canon deluged his willing listeners. He knew the whole record of every historical place we touched at. If we landed and took a short walk in the country or amidst the rocks, he would

discourse learnedly upon the wild flowers he picked at every step, or the sea ferns growing in the crevices of the rocks. In Cornwall he gathered splendid specimens of two of his favourite ferns—the *Osmunda Regalis* and *Asplenium Marinum*; and he added many a rare specimen to his collection of ferns and fossils.

We had been cruising about the Cornish coast, never weary of admiring its beauties; had landed at Marazion, lunched in the old inn, and once more visited St. Michael's Mount: so much like, yet so much less beautiful than its sister mount in Normandy. We had entered Dartmouth harbour—so full of quiet charm—and gone up the Dart in the launch, admiring for the twentieth time all the wooded splendour of its banks—never more rich in foliage than in this year of which we write.

Again we had marvelled at its vagaries, its twists and windings, so that at times it looks more like a series of lakes than a flowing river. There were herons on the reaches, who would not permit too close an approach to their sacred plumage. Villages nestling amidst the trees seemed fast asleep: and it must have been beauty sleep, for nothing lovelier could be imagined. We admired the Anchor Stone, where Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have smoked his first English pipe. Sir Fred lighted a cigarette in its honour, and offered one to the canon, knowing that for him the fragrant weed had no attraction.

"I have never been able to understand the allurements," said the canon. "It must be purely imaginary, since if you do not see your smoke you cannot tell if your pipe is alight. Without doubt it is a bad habit, for I see men becoming absolute slaves to it. Deprived of their pipe they are miserable as fish out of water. Now that is a distinct evil. But the pipe has given way very much to the cigarette, I perceive: a yet more insidious way of burning your idol."

Sir Fred laughed.

"You are severe," he said; "even something of an alarmist. As for myself, I believe I smoke because others smoke, far more than for any special love of it. It has never had any great fascination for me. If Raleigh really did smoke his first pipe on that pinnacle, the rock has something to answer for. I suppose men have died of smoking, just as of drinking and other things."

"Myriads," answered the canon; "and will go on doing so to the end of time."

"Or the millennium," laughed Sir Fred.

We had landed at quaint old Totnes, and passed up through the Eastgate to the High Street, mourning the lost beauty of the ancient church, which, originally eleventh century Norman, stately and magnificent, has passed down to its present day transitions.

Here, on the edge of Dartmoor, we had felt inclined to linger awhile and grow familiar with the valleys and red deer, the wild flowers and ferns growing in such boundless profusion: but time

would not admit of any lingering, and Sir Fred had unspoken ideas brooding in his mind.

We had cruised about the Cornish coast, with all its wonderful red rocks; crossed over to Scilly, climbed the hill of St. Mary's, and lunched at the quaint little inn, perched as it were between heaven and earth, and looking as if half a gale would blow it into the sea. We had wandered about the gardens of Tresco, and agreed that they were overrated, though the isolation was delightful. And now we were again outside Falmouth, admiring for the hundredth time the beauty of its position, perhaps unequalled on that coast. We entered the wonderful harbour guarded by the Castles of Pendennis and St. Mawes. Between them lies the Black Rock, and in the old days (as stated in a previous paper) the Rector was called Lord of the Black Rock, and every vessel entering the harbour paid him a toll.

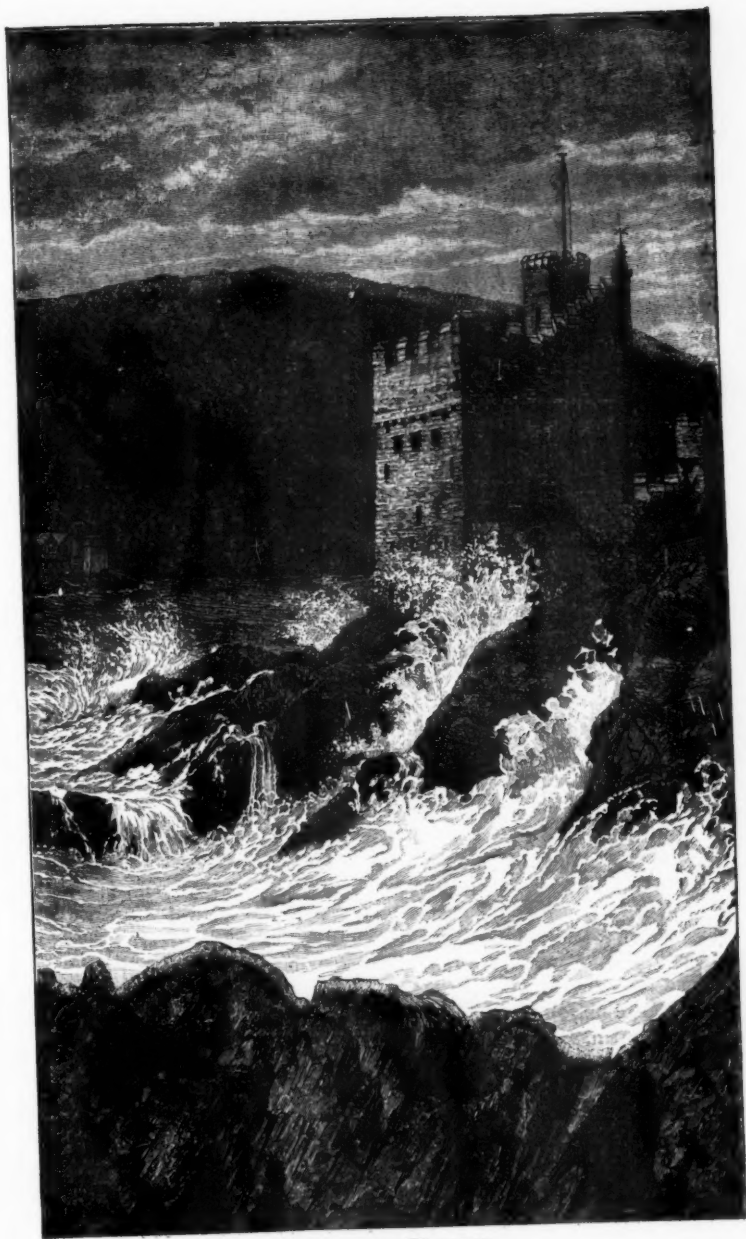
The harbour, consisting principally of a number of creeks and estuaries, is comparatively unbounded, forming scenes of unrivalled beauty: and it has been said that "a hundred sail of vessels might anchor in it, and not one see the mast of another." We had gone up the Fal, which many think still more beautiful than the Dart. In one way it was a painful experience, for it brought back scenes and days to us that could never return. Our old friend the Rector had resigned: a new Rector reigned in his stead whom we knew not. The whole place still seemed filled with the strong and striking personality of our courtly old friend and tutor, his extraordinary mental vigour and animation; that sympathetic voice and kindly judgment which made everyone go to him in their troubles, sure of a patient hearing and a gentle dealing.

Therefore to us, this visit to Falmouth was not an unmixed pleasure. But the beauty of the place was still great as ever, and in this we all revelled.

The heat still remained at brooding-point; the sun poured down his intense glare by day, the moon still gave us her silvery light; still lighted up the Night-Watches: and there were few Night-Watches in this excessive heat, during our whole excursion, that did not find us wakeful and vigilant.

One night in particular, before this, we had entered Fowey harbour. The ruined forts were sleeping in the moonlight: and looking upon them, we went back to the days of Edward IV. and imagined the chain stretching across the harbour mouth from fort to fort.

The canon had much to say of an antiquarian and historical nature: carrying us back to early times by his vivid descriptions and clear memory. Fowey, he said had sent many a vessel to the Holy Land during the wars of the Crusades. She had had a great past, even as she was a great harbour: great in the wars of Edwards I. and III. and Henry V.: contributing in the reign of the



DARTMOUTH HARBOUR.

third Edward forty-seven ships and seven hundred and seventy men for the blockade of Calais.

We had gone up the little river in the launch, the banks lying bright and calm and peaceful in the moonlight; the moonbeams shimmering upon the water. All nature was at rest; the birds slept in their nests; one heard nothing but the occasional hooting of an owl, the cry of some other night-bird, or the far-off baying of a dog at the moon.

And some distance up, close to an old church, with gravestones sleeping in the moonlight, we had grounded, and for a time thought we should have to wait the tide's pleasure before getting off; when suddenly the boat shifted and we found ourselves free. It was past the witching hour, and Sir Fred proposed we should land and explore the churchyard in search of ghosts. Land we did, but the canon laughed the idea of ghosts to scorn. The graves all lay clear and still in the moonlight.

"It is too calm a night for ghosts," said the canon, "and certainly too bright."

But at that moment he gave a violent start. Yes; something was flitting amongst the gravestones; something white and noiseless; diaphanous even; it had wings—and we heard an unearthly breathing. Were his theories at last to find contradiction—his life's opinions to prove all wrong just when life was slipping from him?

But, alas, a closer inspection did away with the ghost problem. This white, noiseless, moving, diaphanous, breathing apparition—so fancy runs away with us—proved nothing more than a white garment spread upon the hedge beyond the tombstones to dry: perhaps forgotten when other garments were gathered in by the amiable and well-meaning laundrywoman.

We all sighed involuntary, the canon's a sigh of relief. His theories were safe; this was an argument in his favour; all ghosts thoroughly examined would prove nothing more supernatural than garments hung out to dry. Our sighs were perhaps of disappointment. We both wished to see a ghost: had never even heard one: no *poltegeist* had honoured us with a series of insane vagaries. And we should have had a certain pleasure in assisting at the crumbling away of the canon's unbelief.

This little episode over, we found, to our surprise, that the church door was open. Like the garment on the hedge, it evidently had been forgotten. Was the washerwoman also parish verger—and had something happened on that particular night to cause this strange lapse of memory? Had *she* seen a ghost, to scare away her memory and her wits? Or—excellent washerwoman though she might be—had other and stronger and more material spirits stepped in and doubled her vision at the expense of her remaining senses? Whatever the cause, we profited by the omission, and in the dead of night,

in the Night-Watches, in the midnight stillness, found ourselves walking eastward up the aisle of the little church.

It was in deep shadow and light. The moonlight streamed in



LAND'S END.

through the old windows falling upon the pews and athwart the pavement. Where the moonbeams fell not, darkness dwelt : and in that darkness ghosts might lurk.

It might have been the abode of the dead quite as much as the graves outside, so solemn the scene, so profound the silence. Seldom could this pavement have been trodden in the dead of night, for surely not often had defective memory or too ample vision left an open door for the benefit of owls, ghosts and other midnight visitants that might chance to pass that way.

"It is of mixed architecture," murmured the canon, who was nothing if not antiquarian: "I can just discern so much: Decorated and Perpendicular: not my favourite school by any means, yet very beautiful. The very church for a ghost, though it could hardly boast of going back to the Conqueror. I imagine we should find many fine old churches about, if, Sir Fred, you explored the neighbourhood during the hours of daylight."

But Sir Fred passed over the remark in silence. When once he had made up his mind to any particular course, he was no more to be turned aside than Mrs. Partington succeeded in turning back the ocean with her broom.

We left the church to its silence and its dead, and presently the launch took us down the river without further running aground. The quaint harbour, with its old and new-world houses rising above it, slept in the moonlight. It was all a scene to be remembered; far more impressive, far lovelier, than in the broad hours of day. We had the world to ourselves.

With dawn breaking in the east we had steamed downwards towards the Land's End—our world's end at that moment—with its wonderful red rocks jutting out into the deep sea that takes all colours: now blue, now green, now a mixture of both, and now, under lowering skies, a cold, cruel grey. We have seen it in all its phases, all its moods, and it is always beautiful, always full of a subtle sense of companionship which forbids loneliness even when alone.

And now in Falmouth Harbour, when the sun had twice risen and set since our Fowey adventure, we were quietly lounging on deck in our long chairs, enjoying the night and the moonlight—it was beginning to wane, that glorious moon, and was no longer "round as a shield"—very soon we should lose it altogether—when Sir Fred suddenly startled the silence almost as he had startled us that past day in his rooms on announcing his intention of going down Channel.

"I have an idea that has been taking form for some days past," said he. "It is now consolidating."

"Then it cannot relate to ghosts," laughed the canon; "no one ever heard of a consolidated ghost. Shadows are essentially immaterial, and defy brick walls and closed doors. Of course I am only quoting from the popular superstition," he added; "not giving you an opinion. But now, Sir Fred, for your consolidated idea. I venture to say it will be more tangible than ghosts and shadows."

"It is nothing great and wonderful," said Sir Fred; "neither a

flash of genius nor an inspiration. I know"—turning to us—"your love for Brittany, and I don't know that mine is much less. Its charm and simplicity and picturesqueness are fast dying out: and very soon it will cease to be a hundred years behind the times in civilisation and a hundred years in advance of them in point of interest. We have sufficient days before us, and I propose a run over to the North Coast and a flying visit to wonderful old Morlaix with its ancient houses, and quaint old Roscoff with its ancient fig-tree. Old Katerine at the Hôtel d'Europe will be charmed to see you and to make my acquaintance. We shall have a day or two in a new atmosphere and listen to an unknown tongue—I don't pretend to understand the Breton patois—and it will agreeably fill in the



LAND'S END.

measure of our days. Of your approbation, my dear C., I am assured; what say you, my dear canon?"

The canon looked grave, and kept silence for a few moments: then delivered himself of the following address:—

"I think your idea excellent, Sir Fred, and that you should carry it out by all means. But all day long it has been borne in upon me that my furlough should come to an end. I feel that I ought to be getting back to Rochester, holiday though I am taking. I am not at all at home among the Bretons, who have always seemed to me a species of savage, superstitious and uncivilised; and I am more conversant with the dead languages than with the living, my mother tongue excepted. I have had a most delightful run down Channel with you; and whether I have found most enjoyment in our night scenes or our day excursions, I can hardly say. Certainly I

never spent so many consecutive night watches away from my pillow. But I am not sure I don't begin to feel a certain weight of years advising my return to sensible ways. Discretion is the better part of valour. You, my dear Sir Fred, cannot sympathise with me. You are young; you imagine you will be always young. When you have reached sixty or seventy, still, you say, you think you will be young. But alas! there comes the hardening of the tissues; deterioration sets in; a fit of the gout, or an attack of jaundice, suddenly deprives you of the last subtle essence of youth, and you realise that you are indeed *old*. That has been my experience; that I imagine is the sad experience of most. But I talk to deaf ears; the young can no more fancy themselves old, than the old can throw themselves back into youth. The mills that are to grind us young again are only to be found on the other side the border. And so I think you must get rid of your ecclesiastical element, and cross over without him."

"But I don't like the idea of losing my chaplain," laughed Sir Fred. "Who will say grace for us, exorcise evil spirits, and keep our superstitious pilot within bounds?"

"Hush!" laughed the canon. "Let sleeping dogs lie. I fancy that I have exorcised the superstitious spirit even of your pilot. Wake it not. But I almost think that I am a little selfish in pleading my cause. I have long wanted to pay a visit to my very old friend and contemporary, Canon A. of Exeter. He is just now in residence, and nothing would delight him more than a telegram announcing that I am on my way to spend forty-eight hours with him. Then again," smiled the canon, "I really think you have pumped me dry. I have exhausted my store of antiquarian lore. You must indeed feel like an encyclopædia that has suddenly become animated and put on flesh and bones. Now in Brittany I should have to listen and not impart: imagine myself St. Paul sitting at the feet of two Gamaliels. I doubt if my pride and vanity would stand the trial. To serve where we have reigned—ah! Sir Fred, you will know what that means some day, but not to your cost, I hope. There are chains and shackles we would not be without, but they have nothing to do with an old ecclesiastic's 'pride of intellect.'"

"Wasn't that one of the temptations of the devil in connection with Cologne Cathedral?" asked Sir Fred; "or am I getting hopelessly mixed?"

"By no means confined to Cologne Cathedral," laughed the canon; "though I believe it was one of the seven deadly sins. Since then, if not before, it has spread over the world. Then you give in to my wish, and land me here, Sir Fred?"

"If indeed it is your wish, sorry as we shall be to part with you," replied Sir Fred.

"All through this day I have been screwing up my courage to this point," returned the canon; "making up my mind to ask you to let



OLD MILL : RYE.

me land and leave you here. It really requires great moral resolution, for my days with you have passed as a dream, a tale that is told. Never do I remember to have enjoyed anything more. The most interesting of coasts, the loveliest of yachts, the best of weather, the most perfect companionship—and the daily gratification of playing Mentor or Gamaliel!—Could earth add any further element of happiness? But whilst bestowing with one hand, she takes away with the other. Time flies and robs us of our best before we realise our possession. 'There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away.' Is it not Byron who sings thus in one of his matchless little poems? I haven't opened him since my salad days, but the line lingers in my memory. Probably I was more in sympathy with him then than I should be now. Well for us that old age has its compensations, or we should never live through it: only it seems to me that the old should live in one hemisphere and the young in the other."

"The result—chaos," laughed Sir Fred. "Depend upon it, nature makes no mistakes, and Providence knows better than you do, my dear canon. We want the old to guide us and give us advice, and——"

"Advice that is often asked but seldom taken," interrupted the canon, laughing also; "but that is only human nature. We are all grown-up children, and the only difference is that some are a little wiser than others, but the others never believe it. They are like the Radicals and Socialists, and think every one is and should be on the same dead level. And again they are like the Radicals in making one solitary exception—the first personal pronoun singular. Let a man preaching the doctrine of all things in common suddenly come into a fortune—and how quickly he veers round!"

So talking the Night-Watches passed away and day broke in the East.

"The Morning Watch! the Morning Watch!" cried the canon. "Sir Fred! Sir Fred! for me beauty sleep will avail little, but for you these nightly vigils are not to be cultivated."

"You are as bad as the old pilot," laughed Sir Fred, "and think we are made of porcelain and should be labelled 'brittle.' But I assure you we are of sterner stuff. Individually, I can go for weeks on an average of three hours' sleep: but then I sleep in earnest, and not as some do, with one eye open. When I am once off it is a profound slumber, dreamless and refreshing. Not mine to wander in amaranthine groves. Never in my sleep will the winged angel visit me. I am hardly conscious of dreaming six times in a year, but those six times make up for the rest. It is as though the spirit detached itself from the body and wandered into other worlds. I go through the most extraordinary experiences."

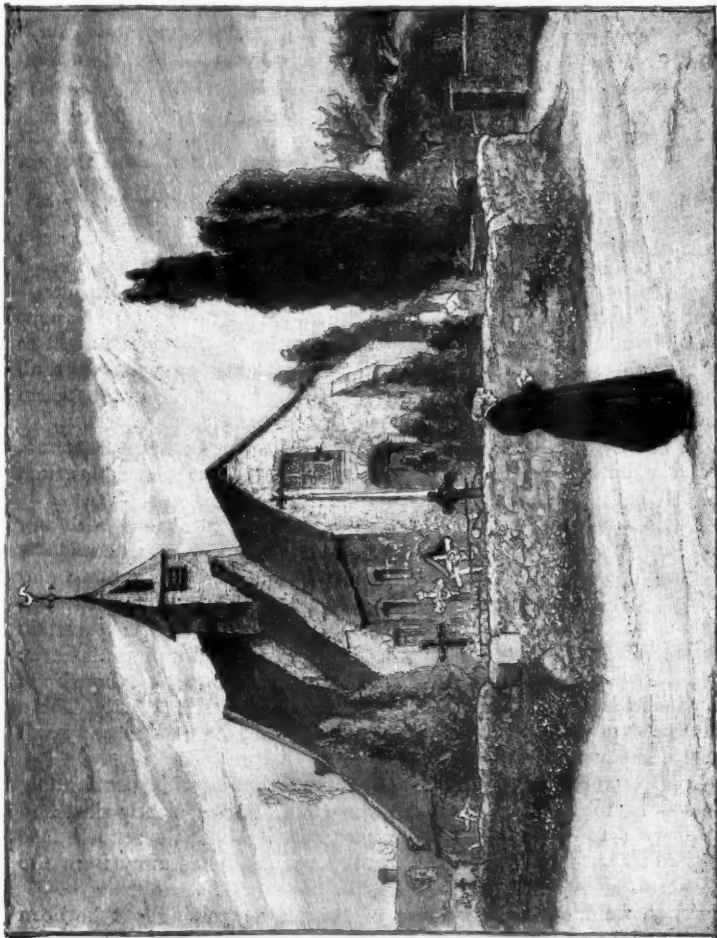
"You should record them," said the canon sceptically; "the Psychical Society would give one of its ears to get hold of you."

"It never will," returned Sir Fred. "I could never stand the fire

of their cross-examination—not even if I thereby made you a convert, my dear canon.”

“A convert to what?” asked the canon.

“Dreams, visions, ghosts, omens, warnings——”



LIFE'S EVENING.

“Spare me! Spare me!” cried the canon. “Merciful powers! what a list you enumerate. My dear Sir Fred, let me live out my allotted days! But,” laughing and rising, “my allotted nights are certainly coming to an end. We have not been in bed once this week until cockcrow. Let us now retire at any rate, before the

chariot wheel of Phœbus rises in the East. But oh, how lovely, how unearthly, how heavenly is all nature twixt the night and the day! The hour when we are nearest the unseen world. The only hour when I hear the rustle of angels' wings. It is far more a weird and witching hour than midnight. The witchery there consists of nothing but darkness and the twelve slow and solemn strokes. It is very material, and only terrifying to childish minds. Now, Sir Fred, not another word! Though I do think"—laughing—"that in that respect, I am chief offender."

"We shall be lost without you," laughed Sir Fred; "and for the sake of excitement shall be driven to quarrelling with each other. My dear canon, I retract—we will not let you go!"

The canon shook his head.

"It is best and wisest that I should depart," he said. "Do not make it too difficult for me. These have been days of paradise. I feel ten years younger than I did the day we met in Rochester—happy day for me! Let me retire with all these wonderful impressions full upon me. Any hour the tide might turn! Now good-night to you both. May all good angels guard and keep you. We all have our guardian angels—I believe firmly in that. My scepticism does not reach to the unseen, but to the unseen becoming visible."

"Yet the witch of Endor——" began Sir Fred; but the canon, placing both hands to his ears, disappeared down the companion, and thus the witch was "laid."

With true sorrow and regret we parted the next day with our Admirable Crichton. He was one of those men who ever do and say the right thing, thus making themselves eminently agreeable, and whose loss creates a void not easily filled. They carry their own charm with them: a charm consisting of two elements: a certain mesmeric atmosphere soothing to all who come within its influence: and that other nameless element which arises from perfect breeding: a power that is all the greater from its very unconsciousness. These are the natures that rule others, though it may be that to sway and rule is the last object they have in view.

We accompanied the canon to the station, and saw him comfortably seated in the train that for a time would be sufficiently slow and deliberate to satisfy even a Cornishman. His pale, refined face looked its last farewell upon us as the carriages rolled away from the platform.

Then we too took our leave of Falmouth; passing out between the Castles and steering clear of the Black Rock. Slowly the vision of town and hills receded and disappeared, and lovelier vision could not be. And still the sky was without a cloud and the sun poured down its intense rays, and threw its brilliant gems upon the water. The sea was a deep emerald green, clear and boundless, and hour after hour passed away as we idly lay in our long chairs upon the deck, read out passages from our favourite authors, and indulged in



AT ROSCOFF.

a dolce-far-niente existence for which alone life in such weather was made. Few vessels crossed our path: and now and then a flock of birds winging their rapid flight overhead alone broke the uninterrupted blue of the sky. The sea was calm as a lake, the crossing perfectly uneventful; nothing indicated that before many hours had passed the elements would be at raging war with each other.

The day went on to evening, evening to night. The sun went down a urid ball throwing its blood-red glow upon the waters, as though it had had enough of the monotony of peace. When the calm Night Watches were passing away we steamed into the quaint little harbour of Roscoff, having taken on board a Breton pilot acquainted with the rocks and shoals of his dangerous coast. We came to an anchor. The Night Watches, we say, were passing into the Morning Watch, and day was breaking in the East when, remembering the canon's exhortation, we sought our couches and the oblivion of sleep.

We landed early the next morning. On the pier was a small crowd of sailors and women, talking like a flock of magpies, gesticulating and uttering their incomprehensible patois. Their theme was evidently the *Daphne*. Where she had come from, who she belonged to, what she wanted, these and similar questions were bandied about from one to another. A bombarding enemy would hardly have created greater excitement. It was quite refreshing to hear and see them.

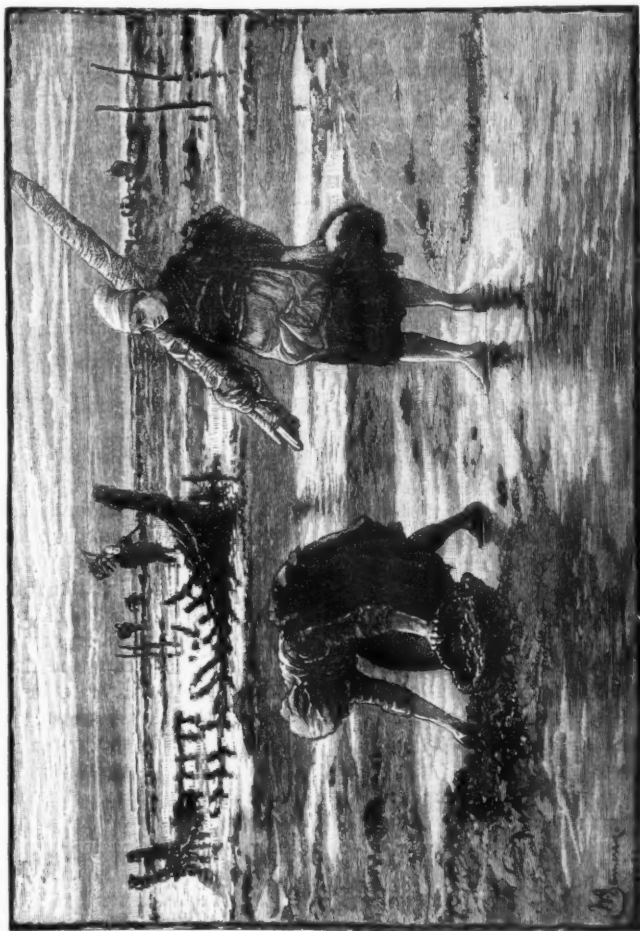
We left them to interview the Breton pilot, and once more found ourselves in the quaint little town where three centuries and a half ago Mary Queen of Scots landed, and though only five years old, was taken to St. Germain to be affianced to the Dauphin. Better for her had she remained in France all her life, and never returned to Scotland; to plots and intrigues and a death that throws its sad shadow upon history. Here, too, came the Young Pretender when he fled from Scotland: and so about this Breton Roscoff there lurks a strong flavour of English history: and—so stolid and English-looking were some of the chattering sailors—one could almost fancy it had left some physical impression upon the little town, Anglicising its very air.

The narrow streets of Roscoff, going up from the sea, were as picturesque as ever, the women, sturdy and industrious, worked almost as hard as their sisters on the Ile de Batz, across the isthmus. Many a snapshot did we take with our kodak, and the women, laughing and running indoors—pretending a shyness they did not feel—the Roscoff women are not shy—would put their heads out again and ask for “a portrait.”

Once more we sat under the old fig-tree, capable of sheltering two or three hundred persons, and pleased ourselves with imagining that in the past centuries both Mary Stuart and the Young Pretender had wandered beneath its shade. True it belonged to an old Capucin

convent, but the monks would only too gladly welcome the future Queen of France, who might, if she came to the throne, make or mar their fortunes by a stroke of her pen.

Outside the town we came to a small village church, where its old vicar, a black skull cap showing above his white hair, walked and



BEFORE THE STORM.

read his breviary, like the old Capucin monks in the times gone by, fulfilling the quiet measure of his days. He, too, was transferred to our little kodak, with his church for background: and as he looked up and smiled just after the performance, and noted what we had done: "Dieu vous bénisse, mes enfants," he said, his voice full of

a life's patient waiting. "You have there the portrait of a man who all his life has tried to be a saint, and finds himself only a sinner at the end." But the quiet calm and beauty of the face assured us that the endeavour had not failed. He was far more saint than sinner.

Then we took an early train to Morlaix and soon found ourselves once more rejoicing and revelling in the quaint old houses and picturesque outlines of that wonderful old town.

It was the hour of *déjeuner*. Madame Hellard at the Hôtel d'Europe was at her front door, taking the air for five minutes—such air as was to be found in the low-lying town. She looked pale and languishing, and breathed almost like a fish out of water. We had the effect of an apparition upon her. No sooner did she catch sight of us than she turned paler than before, and sank into a chair providentially behind her in the passage.

"Ah, monsieur! you have deprived me of my legs! Is it possible that it can be you? Have you descended from the clouds? What good fortune brings you to Morlaix?"

"But, madame, you are looking pale; you are not yourself," we said when explanations had been given, and madame had led the way to her bureau.

"Oh, monsieur, I am not well. The health is not good. They call it liver, but I don't know. It may be more than that. We are thinking of leaving Morlaix; it is a secret as yet, but it may well come to pass. Perhaps change of air will restore me."

"But where shall you go?" we asked, surprised at the information. We had looked upon our hosts as fixtures, firm and immovable as the ancient houses.

"Trouville, monsieur. We think of going to Trouville. It is for the sake of our son—to give him a better position. Trouville is fashionable. Morlaix, *voyez vous*—the greater number of our customers are commercial travellers. They want too much for their money. It is a great toil for a small return. And the years begin to count with us. We cannot go on for ever. But, messieurs, you will take *déjeuner*. It is just over—you will have the room to yourselves. But I will take care your *déjeuner* does not suffer," added madame with a smile. "No *réchauffés* for you as long as I reign here."

"We will go up if only for the sake of saying *Bonjour* to Katherine. She is there?"

"Katherine?" returned madame. "Why, she is my right hand, monsieur; and sometimes I think my left also. She is in ten places at once and directs every one of them. But she will have an attack of the nerves on seeing you."

We went up. The room was almost deserted, but for all that, Katherine was flying up and down on the wings of the wind. When she caught sight of us she came to a full stop, her hands full of plates;

in her mouth a choice macaroon, and her streamers fell away like pennants in a calm.

"It is not possible!" she cried, as soon as the macaroon had been satisfactorily disposed of. "Does Madame Hellard know you



MARIE LOUISE.

are here? We have had no intimation of your coming. And the best rooms all occupied! *C'est un martyre!*"

"Calm yourself, Katerine," we replied. "We have not come to stay, but only for the pleasure of saying *Bonjour*. You, Katerine, are flourishing, but Madame Hellard looks ill."

"I am always flourishing," returned Katerine, in her quick way;

"Heaven be praised. If I gave in, what would become of the house? The skies would fall. But Madame is in a bad way. All the same she will get over it in time, mark my words. She will get over it, and be stronger than ever. Ah, monsieur, many a time have we talked of you, and wondered when you would revisit your dear Brittany. It is all just the same as ever. All your old houses are standing, and all the country excursions are accessible. Surely you would like to do them all over again?"

"And now that we have come," we said in low tones, "it is only to hear that perhaps before long you will be leaving——"

"Hush!" interrupted Katerine. "I know, but nobody else knows. It is a secret until everything is settled. But it is sure. Before long this hotel will be in new hands. You will have to come to Normandy instead of Brittany, monsieur; that is the only difference."

But what a mighty difference! Fashionable Trouville, new and commonplace, for this old-world town with its undying charms. No, no; that exchange could never happen.

Katerine arranged a small table for us with her best appointments, and served us as only Katerine could serve. It was a red-letter day in her calendar.

"Un jour de fête," she cried laughing. "Had I known, I would have put on my full costume in your honour. I can see Madame Hellard has been at the chef downstairs. Your déjeuner is perfect."

Unfortunately appetite was by no means in the same condition, but to please these excellent people we tried to do justice to the chef's triumphs. Who could eat with the thermometer at fever point?

The ordeal over we went out and looked up all our old landmarks and old acquaintances and found nothing changed. It was not so long since our last visit, and in these quiet towns people go on from year to year in the same sleepy grooves. Very often the only change is brought about by death. But to-day no one had died, and the old houses were still standing in all their glory.

"If the canon were only here how he would revel in these old-world outlines," cried Sir Fred. "How he would compare Morlaix with Rye, for instance, to the disadvantage of the English—and with reason."

"Accident as much as design has kept these houses untouched," we returned. "A few more years, and they too will go—all but the few that have passed into historical monuments."

"Let us make the most of them whilst we have them," laughed Sir Fred. "Everything comes to an end, sooner or later. We are living in the last days of all that is beautiful and artistic."

It was too hot really to enjoy anything. Not a breath of air stirred. The sky looked more brooding than ever, there was an oppressiveness which seemed to say things were coming to a climax.

Madame Hellard wished to make us a special dinner, but we were strong enough to resist. If we dined anywhere it should be on board the *Daphne* in the cool of the evening.

"Eh, bien, messieurs," she said with resignation, "you will some day come to Trouville, descend at our hotel, and the best I can give you shall not be good enough. That is, if I recover my health. Who knows?"

We prophesied that health would return, and success would attend the change, and madame would retire with a fortune.

"Loin de là!" cried madame. But all the same she brightened up, and we left her with a fresh access of courage, which really seemed—as events proved—to have been the turning-point in her illness.

A quiet evening train took us back to Roscoff. On the sands, here and there, in the evening light, women-shrimpers were busy gathering mussels and looking for crabs between the low rocks. One woman especially, her net over her shoulders and her head held high, walked like a queen, and her name—Marie Louise—was queen-like. She was the belle of the place we were told, and before her marriage the men had fought for her hand. But she chose where she loved, a poor man, honest and hard-working. It was quite a romance in humble life. "I might have married a rich farmer," she said, laughing; "but he was ugly and ill-tempered, and I knew his gold would soon turn to base metal; so I said: 'Merci bien, monsieur; I am not for you.' And now I am the happiest woman in Roscoff."

She went her homeward way and we went ours. Twilight was falling. The sun went down, as the night before, a lurid, angry, blood-red ball of fire. Already there was a subtle change in the sky. Tempestuous clouds rose out of the south-west and spread, and when darkness fell the whole heavens were overcast. The wind began to moan and murmur, quickly increasing in intensity. The sea, lately so calm, suddenly rose. A tempest was upon us. The first flashes of lightning were seen, the first growlings of thunder heard. Men and women standing about the pier crossed themselves: and the women hurried away with anxious faces, and the men examined their moorings. They too looked thoughtful, for a number of fishing-boats were out, and apparently the storm was going to be exceptional in its fury.

Then suddenly, with a hissing sound, it seemed that the water-spouts of the heavens discharged themselves upon the earth. The rain came down as we had never seen it come before. In a short time the place was flooded. Flash after flash of lightning illumined the sky, and peal after peal of thunder rolled through space. The sea seemed to be running mountains high. All the demons of the air had been let loose.

Then, all at once, a tongue of flame rose up from the land. We thought a house had been struck, but it proved to be a hayrick: and

in spite of the rain it burnt and flared, and lighted up the dark night with a lurid glare, until it had burnt itself out.

We trembled for the old fig-tree; but it had stood the storms of centuries, and it stood this, one of the heaviest ever known in the place.

For four long hours it lasted, into the Night-Watches, with almost unabated fury; then ceased as suddenly as it had come upon us. An hour afterwards, the air was still, the sea calm, the heavens were clear and cloudless. But immense damage had been done. In the little Ile de Batz, just opposite Roscoff, where the women till the ground whilst the men go out in their fishing-boats, all their work had been utterly destroyed, and their fields laid bare. On the mainland very little had escaped; but marvellous to relate, no boat had perished at sea. Next morning the weather seemed as bright and glowing as ever; but the extreme heat that had made every movement an effort, had departed, and did not return. Life was no longer a burden.

Yet we felt that the storm was, in a sense, the end of our voyage. The next afternoon we turned our faces homewards. The run across was wonderfully pleasant but uneventful.

"But, Sir Fred," said the old pilot emphatically; "if we had not had his reverence on board to lay the spirits of evil; and if that bird of ill-omen had not hied back to its wicked haunts, the *Daphne* would never have returned to England. The storm would have overtaken us at sea and we should every one of us have perished. Thus I consider that my faith in signs and warnings is once more justified, and I believe in them more strongly than ever."

"In that case, my good Hurst, we will not argue the matter," laughed Sir Fred. "A man convinced against his will—we know the rest. All I can say is, you took us out safely, safely you have brought us home, and we are duly grateful. As a reward for so much skill and devotion, I exact your giving up any engagement at any time that I may be in want of your services!"

"On one condition, Sir Fred: that you become a little less fond of the night-watches, and travel more by daylight."

"No conditions!" cried Sir Fred. "I must be as free to come and go, as I will and when I will, as the bird of the air, as the will-o'-the-wisp—as your friend the banshee. And you know that light or darkness, sunshine or moonlight, you are equally sure of your ground."

The old pilot shook his head, but gave up the argument: as every one sooner or later did with Sir Fred. In the end he always had his way: and his way invariably proved the best. There are such men in the world, but they are few and far between.

STRATFORD'S LOVE STORY.

BY SYDNEY C. GRIER, AUTHOR OF "PEACE WITH HONOUR."

CHAPTER III.

WHENEVER a letter from home reached Vera during the first fortnight of her stay at St. Margaret's she opened it with fear and trembling, dreading to hear that Mr. Stratford had returned from London and had inquired for her ; but in this respect her apprehensions were needless, for his name was not so much as mentioned. It was only natural to suppose, therefore, that he had remained in town longer than he had intended, and was thus still ignorant of her flight, or possibly he had obtained a foreign appointment which had obliged him to go abroad at once. In this case she was safe, and, as the days went by, and she heard nothing to contradict the supposition, she began to breathe freely again. But Vera did not know Mr. Stratford, and there was a surprise in store for her. When Frank came hurrying into the house one day, just at lunch-time, and catching sight of her entering the dining-room, cried hastily, "I say, Vera, wait a moment ; I want to tell you something," she did not so much as guess the subject of his announcement, and only laughed when her cousin Flora appeared to summon them to make haste, and leave private conversation until afterwards. Baulked in his attempt to secure a few words with Vera alone, Frank could not even succeed in giving her a warning whisper as they hurried into the dining-room, and he decided at last that it would be necessary to make his announcement openly, as the only means of saving her from a possibly greater shock afterwards.

"I met a man just now whom we know at home," he said, addressing himself to the table generally. "Stratford his name is—our vicar's brother-in-law."

"Not Stratford of Kubbet-ul-Haj?" said Mr. Prescott eagerly. "Why, we consider him as one of our own people here. His father, old Sir Hector, lived only a few miles away, after he retired from the Vienna Embassy, and was Lord Rector of the University. Of course we can't claim the son exactly as a native of St. Margaret's, but we are quite willing to adopt him. He was only at home once or twice in his father's lifetime, and was in the East when he died, but before that Sir Hector had gone to England to live near his married daughter, who had come home from India."

"Of course," said Frank ; "I remember seeing pictures of Sir Hector at Mrs. Rowcroft's, but he was dead before Mr. Rowcroft got the living of Branscombe."

"A splendid old man Sir Hector was!" said Mr. Prescott, "and I remember the son as a fine promising young fellow. Is he staying here, do you say? I must go and call upon him."

"He is putting up at an hotel in the East Street," said Frank, not daring to look at Vera, but feeling happily conscious that the attention of the party was concentrated on Mr. Prescott and himself.

"I think, Ellen," said Mr. Prescott to his wife, "that we might ask young Stratford to drop in here when he likes. We used to know his father very well at one time."

"Of course, dear," said Mrs. Prescott. "It is rather lonely for a young man to be staying at an hotel in a strange place, for most of his father's friends must be dead by this time."

"Young man!" The term came as a revelation to Vera, and even Frank almost laughed. It seemed so ludicrously inappropriate to Mr. Stratford, who gave one the impression, as some men do, of having been always exactly the same age, and that old rather than young. Even the recollection that Mr. and Mrs. Prescott were still thinking of him as the youth whom they had known long ago could not make them feel otherwise than interested in the prospect of looking at him in this new light. Their curiosity was gratified that very afternoon, when, as Frank was watching a match on the links, he became aware that Vera, who had insisted on accompanying him for fear of meeting Mr. Stratford if she went out alone, had turned a bright crimson, and was trying to hide herself behind him. The reason for this confusion was soon evident, for Mr. Prescott uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, that must surely be Stratford over there!" he cried. "I am right, am I not, Frank? Well, I'll go and speak to him."

"Oh, Frank, can't we go home?" asked Vera pitifully.

"No, certainly not. Don't be an idiot, Vera. You're bound to meet him some time, and this is as good a way as any."

To Vera's horror, her uncle, not content with introducing himself to his old friend's son, brought him over immediately to his nephew and niece, assuring him that they would be delighted to see a home face again. It might be allowed to Mr. Stratford to feel somewhat sceptical about this, in the case of Vera, at any rate, but he accepted the situation, and greeted the two Branscombes in the most unconcerned way, turning to look at the game again immediately, with the benevolent intention of enabling Vera to keep her blushing face out of her uncle's sight.

"You play, Stratford?" asked Mr. Prescott.

"No, I am an idler here," was the answer, and as Mr. Stratford remarked that Vera's cheeks were resuming their natural hue, he ventured to direct his remarks partially to her. "Golf is the business of life at St. Margaret's, and I am a drone in the hive."

"You look as if you ought to play well," and Mr. Prescott surveyed

his companion's form with a practised eye. "Have you ever tried your hand?"

"Thanks, I don't yearn, as Frank would say," replied Mr. Stratford, laughing. "I have just run down to get a sight of the old place, and look up my friends. The worst thing is that one feels so unpleasantly conspicuous, not playing. I have some idea of buying a few clubs, and hiring a caddie to carry them about after me all day (it's really not weather to do it for oneself), just to take away the feeling of isolation."

"Ah, look at that drive!" interrupted Mr. Prescott, his attention completely diverted from the flippant remarks of the visitor to the game in progress, and from that time he could talk of nothing but the contest which was going on. Before the afternoon was over he felt that he had a mission to convert Mr. Stratford to the theory and practice of golf, and in this view he gave him the general invitation to his house which he had contemplated on other grounds. In consequence of this outburst of proselytizing zeal on her uncle's part, Vera found that her flight from home was not of much avail, since she met Mr. Stratford fully as often as she had done at Branscombe. At first she made wild appeals to Frank to take her home at once, complaining that Mr. Stratford's behaviour in following her to St. Margaret's was ungentlemanly, and that he was treating her like a baby, but Frank emphasised his stern refusal to quit the place with the inquiry whether she thought her own conduct must appear to Mr. Stratford either that of a lady or a grown-up person, and Vera was crushed. If Frank forsook her, there was no one to help, now that her mother was far away, and she could only congratulate herself that Mr. Stratford's manner was as kind as ever, and that he did not seem inclined to rush upon a proposal. But a malign fate was preparing a fresh terror for her, and the bolt fell quickly.

"Have you seen the *Advertiser* this morning?" asked Mrs. Prescott of Mr. Stratford at lunch one day, thinking merely of a steamer excursion which had been projected to some place of interest, and of which the particulars were to be found in the local paper.

"I have seen it," he replied stiffly, and Tony, the eldest of the Prescott boys, began to laugh, while Frank cast an anxious and warning glance at Vera.

"Oh, come now, Stratford, you mustn't take it in this way," said Mr. Prescott pleasantly. "Think what a pleasing illustration of local patriotism it gives! No one can say that we at St. Margaret's don't honour our own great men. I'm sure the editor's tame poet has surpassed himself this time."

"Did you notice it, mother?" asked Flora Prescott. "Everyone was talking about it this morning, and saying it was splendid. It's a poem about Mr. Stratford."

"A splendid poem in the *Advertiser*!" said Mrs. Prescott, with mild scorn. "Mr. Stratford, if your exploits have inspired a new

genius, your modesty ought not to shrink from such a wonderful result."

"It is an utterly uncalled-for and unwarrantable piece of impertinence!" said Mr. Stratford hotly. "Why I am to be made a public spectacle for the sake of advertising some penny-a-liner in the press of his native place, I don't know."

"Why, Mr. Stratford, it may be the first occasion on which some mute inglorious Milton has burst into song," said Flora. "It will be the starting-point of his fame. 'Give me a lofty theme,' he will say, 'and you see what I can do.'"

"I say, Stratford, did you see Hodgkinson play this morning?" broke in Frank, with a desperate effort to change the subject.

"Considering that I was standing beside you the whole time, Frank, it is probable that I did," was the answer, very coldly given. "You will excuse my saying, Miss Prescott, that I don't quite see the force of your plea. It is not as if I had any ambition to be the instrument of your new poet's rise. I cannot hold any but a very low opinion of the intelligence of anyone who expects to make a living by writing poetry."

Just as Mr. Stratford had said this, his eyes happened to fall on Vera's face, and the misery depicted there struck to his heart.

"Why, the poor little girl writes poetry!" he said to himself. "I ought to have guessed it, from those eyes. What a fool I am;" and he made a gallant effort to turn the conversation into the channel Frank had attempted, seconded by Mrs. Prescott, who saw that her guest was seriously disturbed.

"Frank, tell me, is it ——?" gasped Vera after lunch, catching at Frank's sleeve and dragging him back into the empty dining-room.

"Yes, it's yours all right," said Frank, "and it reads uncommonly well, too; I don't wonder the people are all mad about it. It's a pity Stratford takes it so seriously. But I say, you called yours 'The Red Cross Knight,' didn't you? Well, they have left that out, and stuck in 'Kubbet-ul-Haj, March 15th, 18—,' at the top, so that there isn't a single soul that can mistake the application. You are in a pretty tight place, Vera. If I were you, I'd tell him all about it at once. Come on, old girl; I'll back you up."

"Oh, Frank, I couldn't," said Vera shuddering, and as the days went on, the feat became more and more impossible to her, although she wished more strongly every hour that she had taken Frank's advice at the beginning. The poem in the *Advertiser* was the one topic of conversation at St. Margaret's for the usual nine days: only in Mr. Stratford's immediate presence was the subject avoided, out of consideration for the extreme distaste with which he regarded it. Hitherto, only the few people who knew him personally had been able to point him out as the hero of Kubbet-ul-Haj, but now the whole population seemed to become endowed with the power of recognising him anywhere. A local composer set the poem to music,

and the boys whistled it in the streets, and one night a band of the college students sang it under Mr. Stratford's windows at the hotel, to the intense wrath of the victim, who refused point-blank to show himself in response to the demands of his admirers at the conclusion of the performance, even though the landlord, fearing that disappointment might render the students disposed to violence, entreated him almost with tears to gratify them. Controversy was rife as to the authorship of the poem, and when a theory that it was the anonymous work of the laureate had been discussed and rejected, it was freely attributed (to his great disgust) to the literary lion mentioned in the last chapter, who was supposed to have adopted this graceful method of doing honour to his distinguished fellow-townsmen. Disclaimers on his part were ascribed to modesty, for the inhabitants of St. Margaret's were delighted to possess a poem from his pen which they could understand and appreciate, and he was daily congratulated on his exploit, while the real author went about unsuspected, but with a growing burden on her conscience, and the feeling that she could never be happy again. At first she entertained a wild hope that his undesired notoriety might force Mr. Stratford into quitting St. Margaret's, but he was as dogged as he was deeply disgusted, and chose to remain, in the spirit of a martyr. All that Vera could do, in her increasing horror of a *lête-à-lête* with him, for she entertained doubts of Frank's sincerity in the matter, was to refuse to go anywhere without the protecting presence of her cousin Flora, a stalwart, matter-of-fact young damsel, in whose company she felt convinced that it would be impossible for anyone to be sentimental.

But one day Flora's *fiancé* came down from London on a short visit, and Vera found herself bereft of her companion. Until she had prevailed on Frank to promise faithfully to take Mr. Stratford out on the links for the afternoon, she entertained the intention of locking herself in her own room, and only coming out for meals, but considering her suitor safely disposed of, she thought it would be possible to go out for a walk. In blissful ignorance of the fact that before Frank had reached the hotel, Mr. Stratford had started off to visit some old servants of his father's, who were living at a farmhouse some miles distant, she set forth by herself, avoiding alike the links and the direction taken by Flora and her friend. The day was so beautiful that even the remembrance of her guilty secret could not prevail to cloud her pleasure, and she wandered on and on, studying sea and sky and lowland, and storing up impression for use in future poems. So deeply was she engrossed in admiring the massive outlines of the black clouds which were creeping over the sky, that it did not occur to her that they betokened a thunder-storm until the first large drops began to fall. Vera was not afraid of thunder, but the prospect of getting wet through so far from home was not a cheering one, and she mounted a bank and looked round for some place of shelter. The only building in sight was a half-ruined shed, and she hurried

towards it, quickening her pace as the rain came down faster. Straight into the shed she ran, and then recoiled aghast, for there stood Mr. Stratford, like herself, taking shelter from the rain.

"Come in out of the wet, Miss Branscombe!" he called out, as she paused irresolute. "Don't stay on the threshold. You will get quite drenched there. Surely this place is large enough to hold us both?"

The thought of running away had entered Vera's mind, but she could not decide to do such a thing again, and obeyed reluctantly. Mr. Stratford found her a large stone to sit upon, and taking off his light overcoat, wrapped it round her.

"You are heated with running," he said when she protested, "and Mrs. Prescott would not like you to take cold."

"But I don't like to take your coat," remonstrated Vera, with an emphasis on the possessive which Mr. Stratford unfortunately misinterpreted.

"My dear Miss Branscombe," he said with some resentment, "if my presence is so extremely disagreeable to you, I will leave you in sole possession here, but you must do as you are told."

"I don't want you to get wet," faltered Vera. "Please don't go."

"Then what is the matter?" he asked. "Why are you afraid of me? What have I done to make you avoid me as you have done lately?"

"You haven't done anything," broke from Vera. "It's what I did."

"What you did?" he repeated, with a good deal of surprise, not unmingled with amusement. "Well, I can't possibly guess what it was, but I think I can promise you forgiveness. Pray don't let it trouble you any more."

"You don't know how dreadful——" Vera began, and stopped.

"Certainly I haven't the slightest idea, but don't tell me about it if you had rather not. Do please consider it pardoned, whatever it was, and let us be friends again. I have been imagining all along that I had offended you, so that it is quite a relief to know that it is the other way about."

He was talking on pleasantly, in the hope of setting Vera at her ease, but the effort was in vain.

"Oh, Mr. Stratford," she burst forth, "please don't! I can't bear you to be so kind to me. I don't deserve it. You don't know what a wretch I am. I wrote that poem in the *Advertiser*."

"You!" cried Mr. Stratford, startled out of his self-control, and Vera bowed her head in shamed acknowledgment, while he sought in vain for something to say which should be at once truthful and polite.

"I ought to have told you about it," Vera went on. "Frank said it was the only thing to be done, but I couldn't. I didn't mean to make you a spectacle, really, Mr. Stratford, but the thoughts came to me, and I felt that I must write them down. And I didn't get any

money for it either. When it came into my head, and I showed it to Frank, he said it wasn't bad, and I sent it to the *Advertiser* without putting my name to it; and then we came here, and then you came—and I am so dreadfully sorry about it all.”

“You mustn't take too literally what I said in a moment of irritation,” said Mr. Stratford, choosing his words with care. “I'm afraid I was rather a brute, wasn't I? And I ought to have been glad, as someone said then, to have furnished you with an opportunity of distinguishing yourself. It was an honour for me. My only excuse is that I didn't know that the poem was yours. They tell me that it is very good, too, and I can quite believe it, but I am not exactly capable of judging it impartially, as you may guess. Still, I shall make a point of reading it carefully now that I know who wrote it, and if anything could make me feel grateful for the distinction, it would be its coming from your hand.”

“Oh, Mr. Stratford!” cried Vera, conscience-smitten by her hero's magnanimity. “I'll never write poetry again.”

“I hope you will reconsider that determination, which doesn't really touch the root of the matter at all,” said Mr. Stratford. “Can't you understand, Vera, that it's not this wretched business about the poem that I mind? If you had only let Frank tell me the first day, a good laugh would have ended the matter, and you should never have heard another word about it. What does hurt me is that you should have kept the secret for so long, and have been afraid to tell me.”

He walked away abruptly to the door of the shed, and stood looking out, saying no more until he came back to announce that the rain was stopping, and they had better think of returning to St. Margaret's. Their walk passed almost in silence, and at its close Mr. Stratford received back his coat and returned to the hotel, refusing Mrs. Prescott's invitation to come in and spend the evening.

The next morning Frank, who had gone to look him up, brought word that he had caught cold, and was suffering from a return of the fever which had attacked him on his way from Kubbet-ul-Haj. Happily the attack was a mild one, or Vera's remorse would have been overpowering, for in addition to the prickings of her own conscience, her aunt felt it her duty to comment severely on her past behaviour to Mr. Stratford.

“He is always particularly kind to you,” she said, “and yet you go out of your way to avoid him. I hope you will treat him better when he recovers, and also behave more sensibly in other ways; for it was simply your foolishness in going out so far without an umbrella that obliged him to walk back in the damp without his coat. You must remember that an attack of this kind is much more serious for a man of his age than for a young fellow like Frank.”

Thus far Mrs. Prescott, who had no idea of the complicated nature of the situation, but thought she saw that a little encouragement

might lead Mr. Stratford to propose to her niece, whereas Vera was spoiling her chances through sheer shyness and *gaucherie*. As for Vera, she felt oddly inclined to resent the implied description of Mr. Stratford as a person somewhat advanced in years, but her mind was in too chaotic a condition for her to venture on either a disclaimer of the statement or a defence of herself. She was duly penitent in view of the harm she had caused, but so confused were her feelings that it would be idle to deny that she felt relief when Frank read out to her that evening from a London paper the news that Mr. Stratford had been appointed British Minister to the Court of Bellaviste, the capital of one of the Balkan states, and that he would very shortly depart to take up his duties in Thracia. She did not exactly want him to go away, but she was very certain that she did not want things to go on as they had been doing, and it seemed the best possible thing for him to leave St. Margaret's without seeking to enter into any explanations. After what he had said, she almost hoped that he would be content to go away without trying to see her again. But one afternoon Frank brought him in, looking very ill and walking with a stick, and delivered him over to Vera for entertainment.

"I think I'll go and look for Aunt Ellen," said Vera nervously, when Frank had left the room with a promptness that suggested a preconceived plan.

"May I beg that you will not?" said Mr. Stratford. "If you are determined not to listen to me, I can't detain you by force, but I am leaving very soon, and there is something I should like to say to you before I go."

Vera shivered. She knew what was coming, but her conscience told her that Mr. Stratford had in some degree earned a right to be heard. She sat down on the dark oak settle opposite him—a little shrinking figure in a lilac cotton gown—and her hands clasped and unclasped one another nervously as he spoke, hesitatingly and with effort.

"I feel a great difficulty in speaking to you, Vera, because somehow or other I seem always to frighten you, unfortunately. I don't think I have quite deserved to be regarded with such abject terror. I can truly say that I have always done my best to approach you with consideration and respect. Tell me, have I ever persecuted or teased you in any way? I really want to know."

"No—never," murmured Vera; "except——"

"Except what? How have I managed to offend you?"

"You—you came here when you must have known that I had gone away from home because of you. I don't think that was very kind."

The *naïveté* of the accusation almost made Mr. Stratford smile, although his brow was troubled.

"And the explanation that I came here because of you doesn't mend matters?" he asked.

"No, it doesn't," said Vera, with sudden energy; "it makes things worse. I thought you were faithful."

"Faithful? To whom?"

"To that—that lady who died."

No trace of the astonishment he felt appeared on Mr. Stratford's face.

"Then you don't know that what first attracted me to you was your resemblance to her?" he asked.

"No—am I like her? Oh, I am so glad! I couldn't bear to think that you had forgotten her."

"Vera," said Mr. Stratford, bringing his chair closer to her, "are you a woman or a child? How am I to speak to you? Does it really make you happier to know that at first I loved you rather for someone else's sake than for your own? You believe that I love you for your own sake now?"

"I—I don't know. I suppose so."

"And it makes no difference to you? You don't care for me? Why, Vera"—he took her hand in his—"I think I could make you love me now if you would only give me the chance. Look at me a moment. I never see your eyes now."

"Oh, no—no!" cried Vera, snatching her hand from his clasp, and covering her eyes with it. "You won't understand. I know you could make me marry you, if you liked. That's just what frightens me."

"Frightens you?" repeated Mr. Stratford slowly. "You are afraid of me then? That is why you have always avoided me and run away from me? But what have I done to terrify you in this way? Again I think you are not quite fair to me, Vera. Did you imagine I should wish to coerce you into marrying me? Can't you see, that, if I married you against your will, it would be rather worse for me than for you, simply because I love you?"

The tears gathered in Vera's eyes, and dropped slowly through her fingers, but she made no reply.

"I am going away now," he continued, "but I will not give up hope. Perhaps things will look differently to you, when you consider them in this new light, and when your mind is no longer wholly occupied with contrivances for keeping out of my way." There was some bitterness in his tone, and it pierced to Vera's very soul. He went on more calmly, "I will not ask you now to marry me, but so long as you are not engaged to anyone else, I shall believe that there is still a chance for me, and some day I shall come back."

"Oh, please don't!" cried Vera, finding her voice at last.

"You really wish me never to come back?" he asked, very quietly, but Vera felt herself the most wicked creature on earth.

"Yes, really," she said hurriedly, almost panting in her excitement. "It makes me so miserable to be always reminded that I can't do what you want. "I do like you very much, but not in that way, and I feel such a wretch——"

"Are you trying to make me feel a wretch, too, Vera? Am I not

to be allowed even to see your face when I happen to be in England? You can't trust me not to tease you?"

"It's not that!" was the vehement reply. "I know it's all my fault—not yours a bit. I can trust you to be kind, and that's why I say, 'Please don't come back'—though I have no right to ask you anything. I only want to be let alone, and to have everything just as it was before——"

"Before I came home?" he said. "Will things be the same to you as they were then if I let you alone, as you say? They can never be the same again to me."

"I am very sorry," faltered Vera, "but I should feel so much more settled if I was sure you were not coming back."

"After that, it is evident that I can say no more. It is your wish that this parting should be final? Good-bye, Vera. Don't think more harshly of me than you can help. I had no intention of being unkind, you know."

He was gone, and Vera stood gazing after him in miserable perplexity. Had his last words an ulterior meaning? Did he imply that she had been unkind? He had said little enough about his own feelings, but she had the conviction that this had been for her sake. What he had said had been enough. He loved her—loved her so much that he would not even wish to marry her against her will. She felt vaguely that she had never been so near loving him as at this moment, but she accounted to herself for the change by wishing that she had understood him better at first. It was too late now.

"I'm glad he is gone," she said to Frank later in the evening, when she heard that Mr. Stratford had left the town already, starting a day earlier than he had intended, in order to frustrate the wishes of his admirers, who were preparing to bewail his departure with a procession, a band and speeches. She believed fully that she was speaking the truth, and when she went to her room early and cried herself to sleep, it was merely because she happened to feel miserable, and not at all on account of Mr. Stratford's going away.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a pleasant autumn afternoon, and the British Minister in Thracia came riding slowly down the road from Mikhailoslav, a country village not far from Bellaviste, which was a favourite resort of the townspeople. Mikhailoslav formed not unfrequently the furthest point of Mr. Stratford's daily rides, and he and his horse were well known to most of those who passed along the road; but no one guessed that he had discovered in the situation of the village a likeness to that of Branscombe, and that it was this that drew him hither so often—a piece of sentiment which would have surprised

no one more than himself had he realised it. As it was, he accounted in his own mind for the attraction exercised over him by Mikhailoslav by the reflection that the road leading to it was the only decent one in the neighbourhood.

Coming in sight of a little wayside inn on this particular afternoon, he noticed a number of people assembled in front of it, and glanced at them carelessly enough. On getting nearer, he saw that the central figures of the group were two young men whose uniform of knickerbockers and Norfolk jackets proclaimed them incontrovertibly to be British tourists, a fact which was further attested by the two bicycles which were leaning against the wall. One of the travellers was sitting on the bench beside the door with his foot propped up on it, as though in pain, the other seemed to be addressing the staff of the inn and a few idlers out of a book of English and Thracian dialogues.

"Can't make them understand what he wants," said Mr. Stratford to himself, approaching the group with the intention of offering his services as interpreter. To his amusement he perceived, on coming nearer, that the youth with the book was no other than Frank Branscombe, while his companion was his cousin Tony Prescott.

"I want a carriage," declared Frank solemnly to each of the group in turn. All listened with puzzled faces, for not only was Frank's pronunciation defective, but they themselves were accustomed to speak an almost incomprehensible *patois*. "I want a carriage," he said again, this time with some natural irritation in his tones. "I should like to know what's the use of talking to a set of idiots who don't understand their own language? A *carriage*, I tell you—waggon, trap, Lord Mayor's state coach—anything on wheels! Why doesn't someone write an ordinary human phrase-book? I want to get a carriage, and this thing says it has blue cushions and a pair of horses!"

"Can I be of any assistance to you, Frank?" asked Mr. Stratford, pushing his horse through the crowd, just as the landlord, seized with a bright idea, had brought out a table and two bottles of wine.

Frank's perplexed face brightened as he recognised the new arrival.

"Who would have thought of your turning up just in the nick of time like this?" he cried. "We were going to drop in on you to-night and give you a surprise; but, thanks to these villainous roads of yours, Tony has come to grief. He got an awful cropper, and his foot's hurt. I know exactly what it is—he's done it before, worse luck!—and I want to get a carriage of some sort to take him into the town; but these idiots here won't understand either German or Thracian, much less English."

"I'll tackle them!" said Mr. Stratford. "But wait a minute. You didn't write beforehand for rooms in the town? No? Then come to me. I can put you up and find a corner for your machines,

and introduce you to an English-speaking doctor. And now for your carriage."

The rustics proved quite amenable to Mr. Stratford's powers of persuasion, and a primitive vehicle was produced, in which the two young men and their bicycles were conveyed in state to the British Legation, where they found, as they had been promised, hospitality and a surgeon.

It was not until after dinner—when Tony, by the doctor's orders, had gone to bed—that Frank had any conversation with his host; but, as soon as his cousin had disappeared, he found himself invited into Mr. Stratford's den, which was decorated with all manner of Eastern curiosities from Kubbet-ul-Haj.

"And what are you and Prescott doing out here, Frank?" asked Mr. Stratford.

"Oh, we're just out on the spree," returned Frank. "We thought we would try a tour which everyone we knew hadn't done before, and we have been pottering about Hungary for some time. It was my idea coming on here—just a sudden thought, you know, but Tony came into it like a lamb. We thought it would be rather a joke to look you up, but we didn't bargain for your beautiful roads. This is the second time Tony's got damaged, and I don't expect a night's rest will be enough to set him up this time, so we shall probably have to do the rest of our time by rail."

"But you will spend a few days here with me? What have I done that you should want to rush away at once?"

"Well, the fact is, our coming here was such a sudden thought that none of our people at home know anything about it." Frank paused rather awkwardly. He had not told even Tony what had given him the idea of coming to Thracia, for it was a sentence in Vera's last letter to him, which had been so elaborately erased by the writer that it had roused his suspicions and made him determined to decipher it. "You will be quite near Thracia," it had run originally. "I wonder whether you will see anything of Mr. Str——" That was all, but it had inspired Frank with a desire to distinguish himself as mediator. But now that he found himself face to face with his opportunity, the extreme delicacy of his self-imposed task made him pause and wish that he had not been in such a hurry. "It is all very well to give the poor beggar a leg up," he said to himself, "but how is it to be done without letting on about Vera herself? Perhaps I can catch him with guile, though." He changed the subject with a suddenness that was somewhat surprising to his auditor.

"By-the-bye, I forgot to congratulate you. We saw your name in the last honour list. Is there any prospect of a Lady Stratford to sweeten your gorgeous solitude here?"

"This from you, Frank?" asked Mr. Stratford, with a forbearing smile. "Your sister, I fear, regards me already as incurably fickle, but I didn't know that you shared her unfavourable opinion."

"He seems all right," was Frank's mental comment, "but he's always so horribly cool about things: I don't see that it would do any harm to go a little further. Vera would be awfully mad with me, of course, if she ever found out, but after all it's telling nothing, only letting him draw conclusions: I believe I will." With due circumspection he began: "I suppose Mrs. Rowcroft keeps you pretty well posted in Branscombe news? Did she happen to mention that Vera has had an offer lately?" Mr. Stratford's face was in shadow, but Frank caught a sudden quickening of attention about his whole aspect, and saw a nervous twitch in the hand which rested on the table. "H'm, he's all square still," he said to himself, "so here goes! Well, it was Phil Draycott, the fellow from the next parish whom you saw when you were with us, and she refused him point-blank. She's an awfully queer girl. A few days after we were rotting her about it, just a little, because Phil had carried on so tremendously. The Gov. said that daughters who refused all their offers were expensive luxuries, and then Vera suddenly burst out with something about a great mistake. Of course we all thought she meant she had made a mistake about Phil, and George asked her if he should speak to him in a fatherly way, and find out what he'd take to come back. She just started up and glared at him, and we thought she would have boxed his ears. She said something about his wanting to insult her, and then rushed out of the room. She came back, though, afterwards, and begged his pardon, because she knew Etta would have made it hot for her if she hadn't, but she wouldn't say any more. Unaccountable sort of young person, isn't she?" He asked the question without looking at his host.

"Entirely so," was the dry answer. "Are you writing home to-night, by-the-bye?"

"Well, it is my turn. We send them those post-cards with views on them; it shows them what the places are like, and saves having to write out guide-book. Faky idea, isn't it? But I thought I would wait to write until we got back to Hungary to-morrow. There's no use in frightening them about Tony, and they might want to know what we were doing down in Thracia. They're bound to say that Tony's accident is all my fault when they hear that I suggested coming here, so I rather think that I sha'n't give them the chance of blaming me until I see how things pan out."

"In other words, you are not in a frantic hurry to write home this very night, saying that you are at Bellaviste and have seen me?"

"Just so! It's probable that I sha'n't write until to-morrow evening, if you have no objection to the delay."

"Frank, you are a trump! Perhaps you won't think it necessary to mention, either, that I am leaving by the morning train to Vienna?"

"How can I, when our train leaves Bellaviste half an hour earlier than the Vienna one?" asked Frank, with great gravity:

The telegraph was at work up to a late hour that evening at the British Legation, and the minister left Bellaviste on the following

morning by the Trans-Continental Express. The pedestrians on the Mikhailoslav road missed his tall figure and his bay horse that afternoon, and the secretary of Legation told inquirers that his chief had proceeded to England on urgent private business.

* * * * *

Vera crept softly out into the garden as the day was closing in, and made her way to the rosery, where a few late blossoms were still to be found. Hither she had always come of late when she wanted to be alone and think things out, in preference to the old schoolroom, which seemed to her nowadays to be haunted by the reproachful ghosts of dead poems. She passed in between the rose-bushes, and, mounting the steps to the time-worn sun-dial, rested her arms upon it, and stood musing, with the sunset light falling full upon her face. Her mother had been speaking seriously to her that day, and she wanted to think over what had been said.

"I am quite sorry, Vera," Mrs. Branscombe had remarked, "that you have left off writing as you used to do. Did you find that it was doing you harm? It was not as if you were conceited about it, or determined to rush into print—it was merely a pleasant occupation for you, perhaps a sort of safety-valve."

"I didn't know that you knew anything about it, mamma," said Vera, wincing involuntarily at the remembrance of her latest adventure in print.

"We only guessed at it, but we have noticed a difference since you left it off. You have been a little snappish once or twice lately, Vera, when the others have teased you; I don't mean only the time when you were so rude to poor George. The youngest in a large family must have things of the kind to bear, you know, and you can't very well resent it when you prefer remaining here to going to a home of your own. You must try not to be unsettled; it looks almost as though you were expecting something, and were impatient because it didn't come. Of course I know that it's nothing of the kind, but Etta said to me yesterday that she hoped you would not find out too late that you had missed your chances, and had become a *femme incomprise*."

"How can Etta be so unkind?" cried Vera piteously. "As if I could feel left out when I have you and Frank and everybody! Mamma, you don't think I am discontented?"

"Not in the least, dear; but I think that during this last year you seem to have lived less in a dream than you used. And awakening is not always a pleasant process, Vera. Sometimes one awakes to find that one has made a mistake."

"Oh, mamma!" The tears, which now gathered so much less frequently than of old, were trembling on Vera's eyelashes. "I thought I could depend on you not to allude to it. You used to tell me that when one had made a mistake one must live it down, and that's what I have been trying to do. And I thought I was doing it

all right, and now I see I have been wretched and cross and horrid all the time."

"My dear child, don't exaggerate so terribly. A little fretfulness now and then is the worst you have to accuse yourself of. It was more for your own sake than ours that I spoke to you. I think it was better when you could shut yourselves up, you and Frank, in the schoolroom now and then, and write your ill-humour away. It seemed happier for you, at any rate."

"Oh, Frank didn't write, he only criticised," said Vera. "Do you think it's a duty to write poetry, mamma?"

"Not in all cases, certainly," said Mrs. Branscombe, with an irrepressible smile, called up by Vera's solemn face. "But I think if there is anything that is a help to you in being pleasant, and in making the home bright, it is a pity to give it up without very good reason."

"I never thought of it in that light," Vera had said, and now she had come here by herself to puzzle out the matter.

"I gave it up," she said musingly, "because I told him I would, though he said he hoped I wouldn't. And I've never written poetry since. It seemed the proper sort of thing to do—giving up something one cared for to show how sorry one was, like burying one's treasures with a dead person—but mamma seems to think that it's punishing my family for what I did. I want to do what is right. It would be dreadful to go on doing wrong for the sake of a good man, especially when I treated him so badly when he was here. Oh, how could I be so silly, so fearfully foolish? It is as if the beggarmaid had refused King Cophetua because he was too grand for her. I have done nothing but want him back ever since he went away."

She looked across the fields at the sunset and sighed, then took a pencil out of her pocket, and began mechanically to sharpen it on one of the stones at her feet.

"It wouldn't have been so bad if I hadn't told him never to come back; there might have been just a chance. But I felt so certain—I think I must have been mad. And he won't come back—they never do." Vera spoke as though from the depths of a vast and depressing experience, but her authority for this sweeping generalisation was neither more nor less than the combined testimony of the doleful poems and stories which, for some occult reason, are specially dear to the heart of youth. She sighed again, and went on. "And I shall be Aunt Vera, and go on living and living, and the children will wonder whether I was ever young, and people will say, 'Oh, she had a disappointment when she was quite a girl, poor thing!' But that wouldn't be fair, for it would make it look as though it was his fault. What they ought to say would be that when I was young I was very silly, but that I found it out when it was too late. Perhaps, if I do begin to write again, he will see my poems some day, and say, 'There seems to be something familiar about this. I wonder

whether I ever met the person who wrote it?' And then, when we are both quite old, we shall meet just like ordinary people, 'Friends—lovers that might have been.' Frank will be Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Stratford (oh, no, he will have been made a peer then!) will be dining with him. He will be a handsome old gentleman, with beautiful white hair and old-fashioned manners, and I shall be a little old lady with grey curls, and Frank's wife will have asked me because she thinks it kind to give the poor dowdy old thing a treat. I shall know him at once, and be scarcely able to breathe when he comes up to me; but he will only say, 'I fancy I had the honour of meeting you once, long ago, Miss Branscombe?' and I shall say something polite, though my heart is breaking, and go home and sob out, 'How men forget!' And he will go back to his grand empty house, and say to himself over a cigar, 'Was I really in love once with that plain little woman?' and I shall cry all night when I think how different things would have been if I hadn't been so silly. How could I expect him to remember me? I don't deserve that he should, but I can never forget him."

Slowly she took a letter from her pocket, tore off the unused half-sheet, and laying it on the sun-dial, began to write in her curiously minute childish hand. "To E. S., after forty years," stood at the head of the paper, and the rest of the sheet was soon filled. Whether it was the affecting nature of the theme, or the fact of her long abstention from verse-making which helped her, certain it is that Vera had never written with quite so much freedom and fluency before.

"Excuse me," said a voice over her shoulder, making her start violently, as she glanced down the paper. "I think this is addressed to me," and a hand lifted the poem from the sun-dial.

"Oh, Mr. Stratford, is it you?" and Vera turned to him a face aglow with delight. "Oh, I mean Sir Egerton—we were so glad to see that they had remembered you at last—only it ought to have been something much better; but you know what I mean, don't you?" How much longer Vera would have gone on talking fast and confusedly, and blushing every moment more deeply under the gaze of the eyes which met hers with the faintest shadow of amusement lurking in them, cannot be known, for she recollected herself suddenly, and made a snatch at the paper. "Please give it me back. It wasn't meant for you to see."

"Not for forty years, I suppose?" the tone was rueful. "You must be a very patient person, Vera. I am afraid I am not."

"Oh, please don't read it," entreated Vera. "It wasn't fair to come up behind me like that, indeed it wasn't."

"What am I to do?" asked Mr. Stratford (his knighthood had only been announced as yet, not conferred). "It seems quite impossible to remove your deep-rooted distrust of me. What have I done to make you assume that the lapse of any number of years

would cause me to forget you? Do you claim a monopoly of constancy, Vera, or is it that you cannot pardon a man for loving twice in his life?"

"Oh, no, no," cried Vera hastily; "but you see you are so busy, and go about so much, and see so many places and people, that it seems only natural that you shouldn't remember—me," the last word very low.

"Because you will not believe that I love you. You know you don't trust me when I say that I do. If you believed it, could you treat me in the heartless way you have done? Rather than let me know that you had changed your mind, you sentence me to wait until we are both old people, and then taunt me with the fact. Do you think that kind?"

"It's not that!" cried Vera in an agony. "Oh, Mr. Stratford, why won't you understand? You are unkind! It's only that it didn't seem possible that you should care about it as much as I did, you know. Oh, I didn't mean to say that"—catching sight of her companion's face. "That wasn't what I was going to say. I meant that—that you couldn't miss me as much as—— Oh, please let me go. I can never say things right."

But it was too late. Her path was effectually barred.

"Can you seriously imagine," said Mr. Stratford, "that I am going to let you run away from me again, Vera?"

(Concluded.)

ONLY A DREAM.

"I DREAMT that every fair and radiant morn,
When the gay sunshine through my window crept,
No longer sad and aimless and forlorn,
No longer of the joys of life bereft.
I flew to gather by the sapphire light
Some dewy roses—cherries blushing red,
And eglantine and jasmine starry white,
Before my love's eyes these delights to spread.
I dreamt—at eve—that in our quiet home
I listened for the step I knew so well,
The step so loth to go—so swift to come;
That there we two the same sweet tale would tell,
The old old story whispered o'er and o'er!
Ah, happy time! ah, dreams of golden hue!"
Unbidden sobs arose—she spoke no more!
"Dear one"—he said—"why, that was my dream too!"
C. E. MEETKERKE.

THE BORDERING LAND.

"The souls of the happy dead repair,
From their bowers of light, to that bordering land,
And walk in the fainter glory there
With the souls of the living hand in hand."
W. C. Bryant: "The Land of Dreams."

THE only ground where we can hope to meet our dead, till we have followed after them through the gate that opens into eternity, is the shadowland of dreams.

"Oh, what land is the land of dreams?" asks a little boy in Blake's poem of the same title as Bryant's—

"What are its mountains and what are its streams?
Oh, father, I saw my mother there,
Among the lilies, by waters fair.

Among the lambs clothed in white,
She walked with her Thomas in sweet delight.
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn—
Oh, when shall I again return?"

The father answers—

"Dear child! I also by pleasant streams
Have wandered all night in the land of dreams!
But though calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side."

Slight and easy of crossing to heaven's little ones is the boundary between the material and the spiritual. And the boy pleads—

"Father, O, father! what do we here,
In this land of unbelief and fear?
The land of dreams is better far,
Above the light of the morning star."

But to others besides children the slumber of the body, as Sir Thomas Browne puts it, is often but the waking of the soul. "There is surely," he declares, "a nearer apprehension of anything that delights us in our dreams than in our waked senses." And he is as content, he says, "to enjoy a happiness in a fancy, as others in a more apparent truth and reality." Without his dreams he were unhappy, "for my awaked judgment discontents me, ever whispering unto me that I am from my friend, but my friendly dreams in the night requite me, and make me think I am within his arms. I thank God for my happy dreams as I do for my good rest." And this though the old philosopher looked forward to a final waking from

the whole phantasmal dream of this existence into the true life of eternity.

Apart from the idea of any actual intercourse between the living and the dead in dreams, the poet Campbell finds ground of hope for our eventual reunion with those passed from earth in such visionary meetings with them now, interpreting their thoughts who have taken comfort unawares from these encounters, as well as from their waking memories—

"If in that frame no deathless spirit dwell,
If that faint murmur be the last farewell,
If fate unite the faithful but to part,
Why is their memory sacred to the heart?
Why does the brother of my childhood seem
Restored a while in every pleasing dream?"

"I dreamt about her," says Flaminia of a departed friend, in Hans Andersen's story "The Improvisatore." "When I fancied that there lay thousands of miles between us, she was at my side, and you also!"

"Thus will death assemble us!" returns Antonio.

It is seldom that these dream-meetings have any specific object, except to soothe our hearts with their reflection, however shadowy and fleeting, of the past. But occasionally, in whatever way the circumstance may be regarded, some definite prediction or item of intelligence is conveyed through their means.

A striking instance is recorded by Browning in his life, by Mrs. Sutherland Orr. Mrs. Browning passed away in June, 1861. On July 21st, 1863, the poet made the following note: "Arabel [his wife's sister] told me yesterday that she had been much agitated by a dream which happened the night before, Sunday, July 19. She saw her and asked, 'When shall I be with you?' The reply was, 'Dearest, in five years.' Whereupon Arabella woke. She knew in her dream that it was not to the living she spoke."

Within a month of the completion of these five years the prediction was fulfilled. Miss Barrett died in the poet's arms, as her sister had done seven years before. "You know I am not superstitious," wrote Browning, describing the event to his own and his wife's friend, Isa Blagden. "I had forgotten the date of the dream, and supposed it was only three years ago, and that two had still to run." And he makes the characteristic comment, "Only a coincidence, but noticeable."

It was, so the story runs, as related in "The Percy Anecdotes," in fulfilment of a solemn engagement that Dr. Archibald Pitcairne, the once celebrated Edinburgh physician, received a similar visit, involving a special announcement. He and a friend of his, one Lindsey, in their youthful days, having been much impressed by the story of the two platonic philosophers who promised each other that the one who died first should visit his surviving companion, entered into a like compact on their own account. Soon after, Dr. Pitcairne, being at

his father's house in Fife, "dreamed one morning that Lindsey, who was in Paris, came to him and told him he was not dead, as was commonly reported, but still alive, and lived in a very agreeable place to which he could not yet carry him. In the course of the post, news came of Lindsey's death, which happened very suddenly on the morning of the dream."

Maria Edgeworth would seem to have been in a sort of waking dream or trance, for it was while she was waiting with her family for an expected guest, that a sailor cousin appeared to her with the announcement that his ship had been wrecked, and he alone saved, the event proving that he alone had been drowned; or, in Andrew Marvell's splendidly original phrase, complaining to his body of recovery from what had promised to be a mortal sickness, the young sailor's companions all had been

"Shipwrecked into health again,"

on the very brink of the haven of death, while of him alone it could be said,

"When life's tempestuous billows ceased to roar,
And ere his broken vessel was no more,
His soul serenely viewed the heavenly shore."*

It might have been with this very incident in his mind that Dr. George Macdonald, writing of a shipwreck in 'The Seaboard Parish,' asks, "But the man who creeps out of the drowning, choking billows into the glory of the new heavens and the new earth—do you think his thanksgiving for the mercy of God which has delivered him is less than that of the man who creeps, exhausted and worn, out of the waves on to the dreary surf-beaten shore?"

Have we not, most of us, at times turned to dreamland for our comfort? When the forms of those we love no longer cast their shadows in the sun, when the sound of their voices, their once familiar footfall, can never more gladden our ears; then, when the craving to meet somewhere, somehow, has become almost intolerable, have we not prayed with Christina Rossetti,

"Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream!"

And by what more natural way could they reach us than this, when our senses are closed, even as theirs are, to the impressions of earth, and our inward ear is open to their whisper, our inward eye to the vision of them—

"For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee."

* Allan Ramsay: "To Sir John Clerk, on the death of his son."

So sings Edgar Allan Poe, the weirdness of whose verse is humanised by such exquisitely tender touches.

Often has comfort been thus poured on the bereaved heart ; and were we more attentive to spiritual influences such comfort might reach us oftener. Beatrice complains to her angelic attendants of Dante that as soon as she had changed her mortal for immortal he forsook her, and gave himself to others. "Nor," she says,

"availed me aught
To sue for inspirations, with the which,
I, both in dreams of night, and otherwise,
Did call him back."

Dante himself is said to have appeared to his son, Jacobo di Dante, in a dream. Not tinged with the smoke of the *Inferno*, as he had seemed to the women of Ferrara during his exile, but fitly, as if straight from Paradise and the arms of his Beatrice, "clad in very white raiment, his face shining with unaccustomed light," whom his son asked if he was living, and received from him the reply, "Yes, but in the true life, not yours." It was Dante, too, after his death, who suggested to the painter Giotto in a dream, according to Giotto's story, a series of Apocalyptic scenes known as the "*Invenzione di Dante*."

Heaven comes down to us, and we ascend to heaven in our dreams. Novalis, in one of his "*Hymns to the Night*," tells how, watching by the grave which hid from him his beloved, he fell asleep, and beheld in a dream her transfigured features, how he clasped her hand, and read eternity in her eyes ; while the centuries of ages which, as it seemed to him, had kept them apart, rolled away from the scene of their recovered bliss, and he wept tears of rapture on her neck. And how, ever since this, his first, his only dream, he calls it, night had been to him a revealer of heaven, and his beloved had shone through the darkness like a sun.

With such dreams was Milton's lonely gloom beguiled. Did Petrarch strive to lift himself into that region wherein she dwelt whom he vainly sought on earth, to gaze on her once more, even to feel the touch of her hand, and to hear her voice assuring him :

"Within this sphere
If hope deceive not, thou shalt dwell with me ; . . .
My bliss no human brain can understand :
I wait for thee alone, and that fair veil
Of beauty thou dost love shall wear again."*

Till, alas ! the dream failed, being but a dream, and silence and vain desire returned upon his soul.

In his poem "*Another Way*," Mr. Andrew Lang expresses the shrinking that some experience from such shadowy encounters in the

* "*Levommi il mio Pensiero* : " translated by Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

pale realms of sleep, looking forward rather to a final meeting in that "true life" of which Dante spoke :—

*"Come to me in my dreams, and then,
One saith, I shall be well again,
For then the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day."*

But not thus would the poet meet with his beloved :—

*"Nay, where thy land and people are,
Dwell thou remote, apart, afar,
Nor mingle with the shapes that sweep
The melancholy ways of sleep.*

*But if, perchance, the shadows break,
If dreams depart, and men awake,
If face to face at length we see,
Be thine the voice to welcome me."*

For, after all, it is never our very life that we live again in dreams, but only the more or less unsatisfying reflection of it. The old empty longing awakes as the dream fades away, and again in the words of that keen interpreter of so many of our moods and yearnings, Christina Rossetti, we cry :

*"O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise.
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet ;
Where thirsting longing eyes
Watch the slow door,
That opening, letting in, lets out no more."*

P. W. ROOSE.



MISS LATIMER'S LOVER.

BY ELLEN THORNEYCROFT FOWLER.

"So he was cursed of all his clan,
Except of me who loved the man."

Not Forsaken.

MISS ANNE LATIMER was an old maid according to the measure of that most merciless of critics, the young girl; she was tired and timid and faded, and ought to have found ample satisfaction for her spinster soul in clothing clubs, and sewing parties, and such-like old-maidenly dissipations; but alas! she did not. Though she was well on her way down the shady slope of forty, she was actually guilty of the anachronism of falling in love—and for the first time too in her grey uneventful life—the object of her adoration being the middle-aged organist of Marley Church, commonly called "old Harry Scott." Locked and double-locked in her own gentle heart was the secret of Anne Latimer's devotion to Mr. Scott; but she cherished it fondly nevertheless. Everything he did was clothed in a robe of heroism and surrounded by a halo of romance. The books he read and recommended became inspired volumes; the tunes he played and taught seemed variations of the music of the spheres.

Miss Latimer's daily walk and occupation was the calling of a governess; and while she instructed the Vicar's little boys in the conjugating of *amo*, she construed it herself after the most approved fashion; a society beauty could not have done it better—perhaps not so well.

To the ordinary observer Harry Scott appeared to be a disagreeable fault-finding, cynical recluse; but the gods—notably the god of love—see otherwise, and with different eyes from the ordinary observer.

"Would you believe it?" cried Madge Lacey rushing into the Vicarage schoolroom one day, "a baronet has been lost or made away with somewhere about here."

"Oh, my dear, how very shocking!" exclaimed Miss Latimer, nervously looking behind her, as if the lost baronet might be lurking somewhere in the schoolroom window-curtains, ready to pounce out at any moment; but the eyes of the little boys gleamed with unholy joy.

"What fun!" they cried as one man.

"His name is Sir Henry Denham," continued Madge, "or rather *was*, for I suppose he was murdered years ago."

The governess shuddered at she pictured the ill-fated baronet

weltering in his own blue blood; but the sanguinary little boys thrilled with delight.

"Who murdered him?" they yelled in ecstasy; "do tell, Madge, there's a brick!"

"Nobody knows," replied their elder sister; "that's the mystery. Twenty years ago he disappeared, and no one has ever heard anything of him ever since."

"But why didn't they look for him twenty years ago?" inquired one of her small brothers with some sense.

"Because they didn't want him. He wasn't a baronet then, but an unsatisfactory younger son who had lost nearly all his money and was a disgrace and burden to his relations. So they were very glad when he disappeared, and gave them no more trouble."

"Then why are they bothering to dig the old chap up again now?"

"Because all his relations are dead, and he is the heir to the title and estates; and until they can prove where and how he died, the next man can't succeed to the title or the property. They have been able to trace him as far as this part of the county; but it is so long ago since he was heard of, that now nobody knows anything about him. Therefore it is presumed that he was murdered on Marley Moor by some tramps, for the sake of such money or jewelry as he had about him and that the body was thrown into one of the tarns."

"How glorious!" screamed the little boys. "We'll go and look for the skeleton."

Skeleton-hunting seemed to their youthful and adventurous mind a sport beside which mole-catching and catapulting sank into insignificance. But Miss Latimer was "all of a tremble," as she said.

"How very, very terrible!" she murmured.

"The police are already searching the moor," said Madge, "and dragging all the pools to discover the bones; but it happened so long ago that they despair of finding anything."

But Archie and Hughie did not despair; they decided to—literally—leave no stone unturned on Marley Moor till they had discovered the missing remains; and their youthful souls were filled with a fearful joy at the thought that any moment they might chance upon a murdered baronet or a modern Eugene Aram.

Their timid little governess, however, looked at the matter in quite a different light. "It got upon her nerves," she said, and troubled her with a haunting fear. Her peaceful little home was made dreadful by visions of the lost man and his unknown murderer, and she remembered having once heard something (she could not recall what) about a baronet's "bloody hand," which memory lent additional weirdness to the state of affairs. Miss Latimer confided some of her fears to the cynical organist, but he was such a rabid socialist and cherished so bitter a hatred against the upper classes that he seemed to regard a baronet as better murdered than not, and could not be induced to approach the tragedy in at all a proper spirit.

"I dare say he is better dead than alive, Miss Latimer," he said gruffly. "Rich people generally are."

"Oh, Mr. Scott, what a terrible thing to say!" gasped the gentle Anne, who had all a single woman's veneration for the powers that be.

"I hate rich people," continued the blasphemous organist; "they wear gorgeous raiment, and eat indigestible things, and behave generally like blots on the face of creation."

"But," suggested Miss Latimer, timidly defying the oracle, "think of the refinement and culture of the upper classes, and what England would be without them."

"I know exactly what England would be without them; it would be like the garden of Eden in the pre-serpentine days. And as to their culture, my dear friend, it is all rubbish! I don't believe you could find a (so-called) fine lady who could spell *mattress*, or who had ever heard of the *ablative absolute*."

"Dear me—dear me—that is sad," remarked Anne, looking becomingly shocked; "but still the women of the upper classes always seem to me such elegant creatures."

"Their elegance is all humbug, and their good manners the thinnest veneer. Their profession is to annex the purses of rich men, and their pastime to break the hearts of poor ones, though how sensible men can be fooled by their expressionless faces and empty heads is more than I can imagine."

"But surely you admire Lady Marley? She is so lovely, and has such sweet manners."

"Hateful woman!" growled the irritated Scott. "Why, the way she patronised you the other day at the Vicarage made me feel positively sick."

Anne looked amazed.

"I thought it so sweet of her to speak to me at all, and the way she praised my little pupils was most gratifying."

"Gratifying indeed! She spoke to you about Hugh and Archie exactly as she would have spoken to her poulterer's wife if the chickens at dinner had been tender. How you stood it puzzled me."

But it had not been a case of *standing it* on poor Anne's part. She wondered if the organist asked the flowers how they could *stand* the sunshine; but being a woman of keen perceptions, in spite of her timid ways, she never argued with a man. If a man attacked her opinions she at once ceased to express them; if he denied her statements she at once admitted that she must have been misinformed. After all, she felt a man was more likely to be right than a woman, and much less likely to confess that he was wrong, which showed that wisdom was justified of her child, Anne Latimer, although the latter had possessed no more fathers and fewer husbands than the majority of her fellow-women. She understood further that the woman who takes her opinions ready-made from some stronger, masculine brain is happier than the woman who manufactures them

at home out of such scanty raw material as her limited knowledge and experience of life can command, which proved that Anne Latimer's outward adorning and ornament were of the pattern recommended by apostolic advertisement; a pattern unfortunately considered somewhat out of date by the modern woman, but nevertheless infinitely more becoming than the most elaborate atrocities of post-apostolic fashion-plates put together.

Anne confided to Mr. Scott the fear that beset her that the baronet's ghost or his hidden murderer might waylay her on her way home from the Vicarage on a winter's evening; but he relieved her spirit by assuring her that he considered either alternative highly improbable, and as the subject was evidently distasteful to him, Anne at once dropped it, though she longed to discuss more freely the horrible possibilities which the tragedy conjured up.

But though the little governess kept silence on the gruesome subject, it engrossed her thoughts night and day, and made her lonely walks from the vicarage increasingly terrible; and gradually a ghastly suspicion crept into her mind which she tried in vain to exorcise, though she combated it as a suggestion of the evil one.

She could not help remembering that, about the time of the baronet's disappearance, Harry Scott was a penniless wayfarer, little better than a tramp, getting what odd jobs he could from anyone who was kind enough to give them to him, and being often on the verge of starvation. He was a mysterious man, and dark hints were given as to his past life; but no one knew anything authentic against him (or, indeed, about him), and since he had been appointed organist of Marley Church he had settled down into a respectable parishioner. Then Anne could not help noticing how Scott disliked any mention of the Denham mystery, and how bitter was his hatred of the upper classes.

All these things were against him, as the gentle little lady could not but admit in her secret soul; but the strange part of the matter was that the worse she thought of him the more she loved him. She had nearly fainted with terror at the mere possibility that Sir Henry's murderer might revisit the scene of his crime, but the moment that it struck her that Mr. Scott might be he, all her fears vanished, and she felt ready to defend the man she loved against the whole world.

But though Anne's fear of the murderer was gone, her fear for him increased day by day. Suppose the idea which had occurred to her occurred to other people also—and that Scott's crime was discovered—and that he was brought to justice and hanged. Her imagination ran riot in suggesting such contingencies till it made her life a burden to her, for even if Scott were innocent, she felt that when once suspicion had fallen upon him the evidence would be against him, and it would be difficult for him to disprove his guilt.

For some time these doubts and fears made havoc in the soul of

the gentle little governess, and at last they culminated in a visit to the mysterious organist himself.

"I have come to see you on a most delicate matter," began Anne timidly; "so delicate in fact that I hardly know how to begin."

The organist smiled, Miss Latimer always unconsciously aroused his sense of humour.

"Surely there is nothing that you cannot say to me, Miss Latimer," he replied kindly; "we are such old and firm friends, you know."

"The fact is," stammered Anne, "that my visit has reference to the murder of Sir Henry Denham."

Scott's smile died out, and his face became very white, but he said nothing.

"Oh, I cannot, cannot say it!" continued poor Anne, beginning to cry, "it seems so base of me to think horrid things about you; and yet if I don't say what I think, how can I help you?"

Still Scott was silent.

"You see I cannot help remembering," sobbed the poor little woman, "that Sir Henry Denham disappeared just about the time that you were so—so——"

"So poor and unknown, you mean," said Scott, coming to her rescue; "so poor and hungry, in fact, that I would have sold my soul for a mess of pottage."

"Yes, yes; and I want to say, dear Mr. Scott, that if you think it better, under the circumstances, to go right away from Marley, I hope you will allow me to give you this, just to help you on your way. I think you should go at once, and it occurred to me that you might be short of ready money. So few rich people even have enough ready money by them to start on a long journey at a minute's notice, you know. Please, please don't think me impertinent, but I do so want to help you," cried Anne, thrusting into his hands bank-notes to the value of three hundred pounds.

The organist didn't speak.

"You may wonder at my having so much money by me," explained Miss Latimer hurriedly, the tears still running down her flushed face. "But I have just taken it out of the bank to offer to you. I am so sorry that I cannot offer you more, but it is all I have."

Then Scott spoke, and his voice was very husky.

"I cannot take your savings, my dear friend, as some day you may want them yourself; but believe me I shall always feel a happier man because you were so good as to offer them to me."

"Pray, pray don't hesitate to take them," cried Anne eagerly. "You see I am not really old yet—only just forty-five—so that I shall be able to work for another twenty or thirty years at least; and in that time I could save quite sufficient to support me in my old age. I have also brought you a few trinkets which really are of no use to me, as jewelry would be quite out of place on a person of my advanced years and humble position; but you might dispose of

them, you know, and make some use of the trifle that they would fetch. Oh, Mr. Scott, please do not think me forward or interfering, but you cannot tell how sincerely I have your interest at heart."

Whereupon Miss Latimer poured out into the hands of the astonished organist her entire regalia; which consisted of a coral necklace, a pair of amethyst ear-rings, two jet bracelets, a cairngorm shawl-pin, three mourning rings, and an enormous brooch. This brooch resembled a gold warming-pan, and had wrought upon its centre, in human hair, an artistic design composed of a tea-urn supported by two weeping willows, and surrounded by a wreath of seaweed; the hair whereof these strange devices was composed having been grown upon the head of Miss Latimer's long defunct maternal uncle. But in spite of the humour of the situation, Harry Scott did not laugh; instead his eyes filled with tears as he said:

"Thank you more than I can ever say, my dear, my only friend. If I had known such unselfishness as yours years ago, I should never have been the worthless, good-for-nothing wretch that I am. Perhaps I can show my gratitude for your kindness in no better way than by accepting it; so I will take the money and the jewelry—but only as a loan. Some day you must let me repay you. In fact, the intention of repaying you will be an incentive to me to be a better man in the future than I have been in the past."

"Just as you think best," agreed Anne; "but please believe that there is no way of laying out my money which would give me as much pleasure as spending it upon you."

"Anne, do you love me?" asked Scott suddenly.

Anne's faded face flushed all over.

"You know I do," she said simply. "How could I help it when I have seen you nearly every day for the last twenty years?"

"I am not worthy of your love, Anne," continued the organist in a broken voice; "I am not a good man and never have been. I had an unloved and unhappy childhood, and the iron of it entered into my soul; then poverty stepped in, and made me worse and bitterer than I was before. Your suspicion against me is a correct one. It was I who destroyed Henry Denham; but perhaps when you hear my whole story you will see that I was not without provocation, nor was I quite the bloodthirsty villain that you now suppose. But what touches me is that you love me now—since you discovered my crime, and before you hear my defence. It is love such as this that saves a man's soul alive."

"I hope it is not wicked of me to love you, dear," said Anne, smiling through her tears; "but I'm afraid I couldn't help it if it were."

"Wicked? It is divine," cried Scott. "Dear Anne, I believe I could be a good man now if you were always with me to love and help me. Will you come away with me now as my wife, and let us begin a new life together?"

For a minute Anne hesitated. She recalled reading a story years ago called 'The Murderer's Bride,' and how she had shuddered at it, and now she actually thought of becoming a murderer's bride herself. It was a terrible idea! But then she remembered that Harry Scott was alone and in trouble, and he wanted her; and what true woman could be proof against such an argument as that? Certainly not one of the good old sort whose outward adorning was after the apostolic pattern.

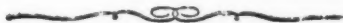
So Anne promised to marry Harry Scott, and go away somewhere where they could begin a new life. They arranged that he should leave Marley at once and wait for her in London, where they would be married quietly by licence, so as to avoid all fuss and gossip. This plan was carried out; and a month after their momentous interview, Anne Latimer said good-bye to Marley and the vicarage boys, and met the ex-organist in a dreary London church. A prim, legal-looking individual acted as Scott's best man, while poor Anne had nobody but the female pew-opener as her bridesmaid. It all passed off very quietly. "I, Henry Scott, take thee, Anne," in the face of all possible contingencies and vicissitudes; and "I, Anne," returned the compliment. The poor little bride was a good deal flustered when they retired to the vestry. First the clergyman and Harry signed their names, and then the legal-looking individual handed the pen to Anne saying,

"Now it is your ladyship's turn."

"What does he mean?" she whispered to Harry, with a puzzled look on her happy face.

"It is all right, dear," he answered; "you are a 'ladyship' now, you know; you are my wife, and I am Sir Henry Scott Denham."

And then they departed to his country seat for the honeymoon, and poor Anne's three hundred pounds and valueless trinkets were exchanged for untold wealth and the family diamonds. And my Lady Varley bowed down to her, recognising in her heart of hearts that Anne was by far the truer lady of the two. And everyone discovered what only the few had seen before, that—in spite of her forty-five years—Anne was beautiful as well as good.



HOW I REARED THE AYLESBURYS.

I DO not say that my sister left home on purpose. Far be it from me to make any insinuation of the kind. I merely state the facts. My sister is an ardent poultry-fancier. She knows the ways and habits of all the feathered tribes which haunt our poultry-yards, from the common barn-door fowl to the aristocratic Wyandotte arrayed in gold and silver lace. She understands the significance of the rose-blushing comb, can appreciate the lordly strut of the promising cockerel, and the high-bred *cachet* of the feathered leg. The rivals in the inherited aptitudes (Mr. Balfour we know does not believe in them) of the good layer, the conscientious sitter, and the bird which trussed at all points like a knight of old best becomes a table. She can trace the pedigree of each one better than her own.

She *cannot* therefore have been ignorant of the fact that our summer setting of Aylesburys was due to hatch on July 15th of our favoured Jubilee year! Yet it was a curious coincidence that a few days before that date she wrote announcing that circumstances over which she had no control would delay her return for another week. Could she have foreseen—? But I am by nature unsuspecting. I felt glad she should prolong her holiday.

By-the-bye, in a careless P.S. to her letter, she mentioned that *should* any ducks hatch in her absence they would require no food for twenty-four hours. She merely mentioned it as a remote possibility, much as one would say—should the Queen and Prince of Wales look in—they *might*, but you hardly expect it.

There was a circumstance regarding this summer sitting of Aylesburys which deserves notice. Having from earliest egg-hood lacked the care of their own natural parent, who, perhaps, after the fashion of parents nowadays had too many other engrossing occupations to allow of her tending her own offspring, they had been fostered by a conscientious stepmother, a wide-winged, ample-chested hen, anxious in every way to do her duty by them, to the strict letter of the law (of nature). But at the end of three weeks—a time when every well-regulated egg, in her opinion, should have developed into a chick—she suddenly abandoned her post without warning or explanation!

As may be imagined, my sister was in despair. I do not speak of the poultry-proprietor herself—now, as we know, an absentee—but of her deputy-assistant-adjutant-general upon whom her duties for the time being devolved.

Ruin permanent and irretrievable threatened the doubly-orphaned Aylesburys already chilled to the very core of their albuminous hearts

by their neglectful foster-mother's desertion. But the D.A.A.G. pulled herself together and determined to make one effort to repair the mischief. So she borrowed from a kindly relative *another* hen, still wider-winged, still more ample-chested; an "unemployed" bird this, with maternal instincts seeking their natural vent somewhat to her owner's inconvenience. Her duty was explained to her; she grasped the situation at once, and took the forlorn ones to her motherly heart. But alas! the D.A.A.G. in her zeal and haste neglected to mention that the work was already more than half done, that but one week more of fostering was required to bridge the interval between chicken and duck-hood! And happy in her mistaken but well-intentioned arrangement, the two left home without even perceiving the complication.

The Ides of March—I mean July—approached, and as once before in history, seemed likely to come and go uneventfully. Overnight there was no sign of impending change in the attitude of masterly inactivity which distinguished the brooding mother on her nest. But the next morning early—comparatively early that is for a person of literary tastes, who disapproves altogether of the early bird, and has no sympathy whatever for the too-early worm it preys upon,—early, I say, did a messenger come, hot-foot from the potting-shed, with tidings that the fateful hour had arrived at last. Indeed one duck on the outskirts of the nest had it seemed already struggled into existence and escaped from the egg, though evidently quite without its foster-mother's sanction or approval.

There was no time to be lost.

The important officials usually present on such occasions, i.e., the poultry proprietor and her D.A.A.G. being unluckily absent, it was clear that the *Vice* D.A.A.G. must do her best to fill the gap. And that is where I come in. Roused from literary labours of a really interesting kind, I rose to the occasion and rushed away in search of a warm wrap for the little stranger, but for some time I rummaged our stores in vain. There was nothing available among the fragments reserved for emergencies, and I was turning away disappointed, when my eye fell upon an article of Jaeger-clothing belonging to my sister which would seem to be the very thing required. Yet I paused—Jaeger-clothing is costly. This particular article was perhaps destined to play its part in the coming winter. Would a poultry proprietor, knowing what was at stake, be willing to make the sacrifice? For a moment I hesitated between the Jaeger and the duck's life, and had all but decided in favour of the latter, when I spied upon a top shelf an appropriate piece of coarse house-flannel which saved *both*.

Another express from the potting-shed in the person of the garden-boy, announcing that four promising ducklings had been stifled in the shell by the hen's resolute determination to sit tight to her nest and crush insubordination in the egg. It seemed high time for the Vice Deputy-Assistant-Adjutant-General to interfere, and I

hastened to the scene of disaster, accompanied by boy, basket, and flannel.

Now our gardener, an old servant of the faithful, dogged kind, has no great respect for woman's intelligence in matters of horticulture; indeed, has been heard to assert plainly, that if *he* had a garden of his own he wouldn't "never let no female come nigh it," with that exuberance of negative which distinguishes the masses and affirms what they seek to deny. But on this occasion he was diffident, and stooped to take counsel. We put our wits together to circumvent the hen, and in a short time one, two, four more birds were rescued from their foster-mother's too oppressive kindness, and safely bestowed in the basket, where they lay prone, a tangled heap of downy confusion.

I breathed again, and dashed off a triumphant post-card communicating the joyful news to the poultry proprietor. It seemed *almost* worth while to telegraph.

The maids indoors went into raptures over the new arrivals, which looked for all the world like a handful of catkins culled from the spring hedgerows. The ducklings became more lusty as the day went on; downy heads were uplifted now and again, and soon a faint "chirp, chirp, chirp," began to sound from the basket on the high kitchen-dresser, where we had bestowed it safely beyond the reach of our handsome tabby. (For Tom, like his mistress, is a poultry-fancier.)

It was such a doleful cry! Perhaps the helpless little fluffly things began to repent having left the safe seclusion of the egg for a world of enemies; perhaps they were only clamouring for food. But though the shrill "chirp, chirp" grew always more *crescendo*, we remembered the mandate of their owner, hardened our hearts, and turned a deaf ear to the cry.

The devotion of cook and housemaid towards the Aylesburys had waned a little by bedtime; perhaps the incessant "chirp, chirp" palled upon them. At all events, retiring for the night I found basket and contents bestowed in *my* room. Luckily all was quiet. The weakling cries had stopped at last, and silence told me that the ducks were now wrapped in slumber as well as house-flannel. So far, so good. I went thankfully to bed determined to follow so excellent an example.

You are no doubt prepared for a night of adventure—a regular *nuit blanche*? You will be disappointed. Broad daylight, not the ducks, awakened me, but my first thought was of my charges. How were they faring? All the bird-world was already awake and worming in its misguided way, but not the ducks. An oppressive—an ominous silence weighed on them and me.

With morning sunshine flooding the room could it be natural for them to sleep on so heavily? The basket was tightly closed, cook had packed up the birds so warm and "comfy." Had she been *too* kind in her zeal? A terrible doubt oppressed me. Could it be that

this dread silence was not sleep but *suffocation*? The house-flannel was stuffy, its coarse folds admitted no ventilation. Had I in my parsimonious care to save my sister's Jaeger sacrificed five ornithological lives?

I turned quite faint at the notion, but with a courage which defied despair sprang out of bed determined to know the worst. I crept up to the basket, and with some difficulty forced open the lid and dived among the wrappings underneath. I threw aside the stiff folds and there lay the contents—living, or dead?—a fluffy mass of torpid down.

How can I describe my relief, when, as I watched, here and there the down began to stir and tremble, here and there a bright eye opened, here and there a bill protruded and began feebly practising that "chirp, chirp" of overnight. I had no more cause to complain of silence.

The trick those Aylesburys played me by shamming death in that disgraceful way, out of pure "cussedness" as it were, upset my nerves for hours, and when the poultry-proprietor at last tardily returned to her duties *they* looked better than *I* did.

For having survived the vicissitudes of that harassing birthday the ducklings turned over a new leaf, and throve and grew till they were quite the pride of the yard. Even wise people mistook them for geese, and no wonder!

The gardener and I always maintained that the preternatural plumpness of that special quintett of Aylesburys counted to our credit. We plumed ourselves upon it. *They* plumed themselves too, rather quickly, and looked in uncommonly good feather as they flocked together to their early meal of worms, now and then gulping down a frolicsome young frog by way of *hors d'œuvre*. And if I had in my poor way been tender to those Aylesburys in their youth, I found them tender in their turn when a few weeks later the time came for them to "dree their weird," and play the part assigned to them by destiny upon the festive board.

MARY GRACE WIGHTWICK.



SOME OLD CLOTHES IN NATURE.

BY G. CLARKE NUTTALL, B.Sc.

THE future of one's old clothes is always an interesting problem. When the favourite coat or the long cherished dress passes out of one's possession, there goes with it the half-curious desire to know into what hands it may eventually fall, or what strange parts—parts certainly never destined for it by its creator—it may ultimately play in the long series of transmigrations before it. A brocaded waistcoat of first Paris fashion has ere now drifted into being the sole garment of a cannibal king; and in the Bush stranger uses even than pudding-bags have been found for a starched shirt of finest West-End make.

Now and then, indeed, in some quaint surroundings one catches a glimpse of them, as of the face of a once familiar friend, but this is a rare event; and for the most part their ultimate destiny is hid, perhaps mercifully, from our eyes. But there is one set of old clothes in Nature whose fortune we can follow and which affords us some very curious examples of man's ingenuity when he is put to it to procure the necessities of life out of unpromising material. These are the old clothes of the trees of the forest.

Nature starts each of her young saplings with a protective coat, an outer layer of resistant tissue, but as each shoots up with rapid growth, the coat fails to keep pace with the demands made upon it, so it perforce tears and splits like the clothes of a growing schoolboy. And just as the boy must have new provision made for his deficiencies, so Nature, a careful mother, sets to work to provide a new protective covering for her hopeful youngster. This new covering is termed cork, and it comes into existence at the end of the summer below the split garment of the year. It is brown and waterproof, and through it neither water from without can pass in, nor the living sap pass out to the tissue beyond. Hence the old coat beyond the cork ring dries and shrivels up, and becomes useless to the tree, and is then known as bark. So bark is simply and only old clothes. Now every year as the tree lives its life, and grows in girth, the same process goes on; the protective coat of the year becomes in turn too small and splits, and a new one of cork is formed below it, and so year by year there is a garment to be discarded—old clothes no longer of value. Many trees throw off this useless matter, just as some people cast away their garments, but in some it stays clinging to the trunk, an accumulation of rubbish, like the hoarded wardrobe of a clothes-miser.

Bark varies greatly in nature and appearance in the different trees; in the birch, for instance, it lies on the trunk in thin white sheets

easily peeled off; in the elm it forms winglike projections from branches and stems; in the planes it is shed in scales each year; in the Scotch fir it persists for several years, while in the beech it clings to the tree for its lifetime.

Now, though it might be thought that bark, discarded and done with by its original owners, had fulfilled its mission, yet really it is often only starting its career of usefulness, for there is perhaps no other substance in the world, excepting, maybe, our own old clothes, which has figured in so many parts. Indeed there is scarcely a necessity of life for which it has not done duty some time or other.

Take for instance food. In the bleak North of Europe, in the most unfrequent times of scarcity, the inner bark of birches and planes is ground into meal and furnishes a tolerable though somewhat peculiarly flavoured loaf. In the famine year of 1812 a large number of young pine trees were cut down by the Norsemen, and for the sake of their bark sacrificed to the exigencies of the occasion. The Laplanders, too, find a dainty dish in a slice of bark with the roe of a fish.

Then as for clothing. It is wonderful in how many ways bark is utilised for this purpose. The women of a certain powerful tribe in Mashonaland, South Africa, strip trees of their bark and "out of the bark fibres they weave for themselves quite massive dresses, two yards long and one yard wide, which they decorate with pretty raised geometrical patterns such as one sees in old-fashioned Marsella quilts at home; these they gird round their loins and fasten on with a girdle of bark netting," says the late Mr. Theodore Bent who recently explored this country. The little aprons—apologies for garments—which the women wear in other tribes of the same country, are manufactured out of bark with patterns worked on them in different colours.

The Laplander provides himself with a cape in a rough-and-ready manner and without any attention to æsthetic details. From, preferably a large beech tree, he cuts a square piece of bark about a yard in length and twenty-four inches in breadth, and then in its centre he cuts a hole through which he puts his head, and thus obtains a water-proof cape at no expense and little trouble. He varies this method sometimes by taking a number of long pieces of bark, in the ends of which he make head holes, and he puts them on one after another, arranging them so as to hang down all round him, and thus he is completely covered in with a light kind of mail armour which effectually guards him from storm of rain or snow. His ingenuity does not stop at his cape, for his boots are often of the same material, the leg-pieces being formed from the circular pieces of bark stripped from logs out of a small tree. In common with other northern nation he roofs his houses, too, with layers of bark, laid on over wood in the manner of slates, and thus secures a shelter not only waterproof but very durable. Mr. Trevor Battye, whose prolonged visit on Kolguev Island a year or two ago created so much interest and apprehension, described on his return the customs and

life of the Samoyedi tribe living there, and among other matters specially referred to the roofs of birch-bark which characterised their chooms.

The North American Indians have found a use for bark in the building of light canoes. A light frame is first made of wood, and over this is stretched a covering of bark, the covering being formed of pieces dexterously joined together by means of deer-sinews, or with threads taken from the root of the cedar tree. The canoe is then rendered absolutely watertight by the application of pitch. When wigwams of skins are not attainable, dwellings built after the same manner are resorted to, and any number of household utensils, such as buckets, baskets, dishes, and other articles are made in like fashion, the bark of the birch being that most often employed. It is in bark, too, that the men among them find a universal friend, a consoler in all times of trouble; for what tobacco is to us, the bark of the red willow—they call it “kinnikinie”—is to them. Sometimes mixed with a little tobacco, more often alone, it is smoked on every occasion. According to Longfellow, the master of life, in fashioning the great Peace pipe:

“Took a long reed for a pipe stem,
With its dark green leaves upon it.
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
With the bark of the red willow.”

To many of the South African tribes the barking season, i.e., the season when the bark is in best condition for cutting off the trees, is one of the chief epochs in the year, so largely do they use the trees' cast-away coverings in their simple lives. On its approach, preparation is made on a grand scale for a sortie into the woods to collect bark, the women and children accompanying the men, that they may find and carry home in their bark bags, large hairy caterpillars which are esteemed by them a great delicacy. Once home again, the treasures of bark are handed over to the women, and the results they produce speak volumes for their ingenuity. Pieces of the bark of the huge baobab are plastered together by mud, and built into granaries and hencoops; the fibres of the bark are isolated and plaited neatly into blankets, or knitted by means of two thin sticks into dresses, bags, and cases. More loosely put together these fibres form nets, which they either employ to spread over their granaries to secure the roofs, or use to stretch across the valleys and catch the game driven towards them in their raids. Bark fibre also supplies the place of string and cord; with it they tie spreading branches of trees together to form primitive cupboards near their huts; it also serves them as girdles, and by means of it they attach snuff-boxes and other ornaments or weapons to their persons. In northern regions of the world we find bark fibre used in a similar way as a substitute for string, while several fibres twisted into a cord is the common harness by which horses and reindeer are attached to

their sledges. The finer fibres from the inner part of the bark are an excellent substitute for thread.

Another necessity of life that bark can supply is light. In the north where the winter nights are long and dark, pieces of the resinous bark of birch or fir serve as candles, while fragments and scraps too small for candles come in useful as fire-lighters.

From quite another part of the world we hear of yet another use for bark. From the bark of a variety of the mulberry tree—the paper mulberry—the Chinese and Japanese make most excellent paper; indeed the quality is such that it far excels in softness and strength that of our manufacture.

In this country we usually associate bark with the Jesuits' wonderful medicine for ague—quinine from cinchona bark. Nowadays chemists extract the quinine, and the bitter white powder can be taken easily enough in tasteless pills; but for our fore-fathers things were not always made so pleasant, and it must have needed a certain amount of courage to masticate and chew pieces of the bitter bark, which was the original way of getting at the active principle.

In the tanning industry, bark plays a leading part, and it also is employed in the art of dyeing.

But it is not only for the necessities of life that men are indebted to it; it has even yielded luxuries. In the West Indies there grows a tree known as the lace-bark tree—a relative of the daphne. If the inner bark of this tree be cut out, macerated, and laid in thin slices it presents a lovely lace-like appearance. This fact has not been lost on the native women, and they deck themselves out gaily with trimmings of it. An ingenious Governor of Jamaica once presented a handsome cravat and ruffles manufactured from the bark of the lace-bark tree, to that dandy, Charles II.

May we not then justly term bark the "universal provider"? Food, clothing, blankets, dwellings, domestic utensils, boats, string, harness, lights, medicine, tobacco and lace ruffles! Surely no mean record of usefulness for some old clothes in nature.



MARGARET.

THE echo of a voice long still
Comes stealing o'er the midnight air;
Again I feel its magic thrill,
And in the soft uncertain light,
Shed by the silver Queen of night
Upon the dim old oaken stair,
Woven in fancy's silken net,
Appears the form of Margaret.

With all her former charm and grace,
With all the old-time symmetry,
As perfect still in form and face,
Unchanged by timely scars and sears,
And lovely as of old appears
This vision of the night to me;
Long years have passed since last mine met
And pressed the hands of Margaret.

Long years have passed, but 'midst the grey
Of this unbroken solitude,
One thought illumines my latter day,
One memory that sustains and cheers,
And growing with the growing years
Brings comfort to my saddest mood.
When dark and doubtful thoughts beset,
I turn again to Margaret.

Then if an earthly love may shine
With something of eternity,
Reflected from the love divine,
I trust that when the consciousness
Of that to come, brings happiness,
My love will not unworthy be;
And when at last my sun be set,
New morn will break with Margaret.

R. BOURNE.

